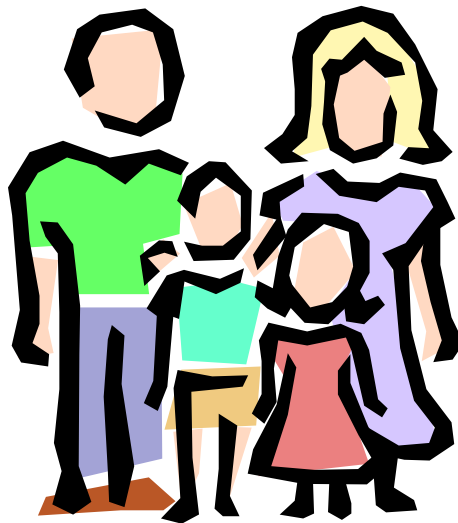


CALIFORNIA'S
TITLE IV-B
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES PLAN
ANNUAL PROGRESS AND SERVICES REPORT
FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR 2006
JUNE 30, 2006



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Children and Families Services Division
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Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

While significant progress has been made to reach our goals, we realize that continued efforts to improve practice and outcomes for children and families are essential in order to meet California's vision for child welfare practice. The State's efforts to examine and improve the child welfare services (CWS) system, as well as respond to the federal review with a Program Improvement Plan (PIP), created a new urgency for developing a system that can provide a public accounting of outcomes for children and families. This report highlights progress made since the June 30, 2005 Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR) in implementing the changes needed to make this a reality. The report is the second APSR to the State's 5-year Child and Family Services (Title IV-B) Plan, approved September 17, 2004, for federal fiscal years 2004 through 2009.

June 30, 2005, marked the end of California's PIP. However, many of the activities contained in the PIP are continuing and therefore will be updated in our annual APSRs. As such, specific goals and objectives initially included as part of the State's PIP have been incorporated in the current APSR. The measurement methods for these goals and objectives are contained in California's PIP, which is available on the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) web site and located at <http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cfsr/default.htm>.

While California is committed to improving outcomes for children and their families, it is clear that critical to the success of our improvement efforts will be both adequate and flexible funding and resources, but also the active participation and collaboration with other stakeholders at the State, county, community and neighborhood levels.

California will continue, through its CWS System Improvements, to make enhancements to promote the safety of children, to promote their right to a stable permanent home and enhance their well-being. California again made a significant financial commitment to child welfare services, as \$13.7 million was included in the budget for state fiscal year (SFY) 2005-06 for CWS System Improvements. These funds were allocated to continue the implementation of Differential Response, the Standardized Safety Assessment System, and the quality case planning and service delivery protocols that were implemented during SFY 2004-05. In addition to those funds, all counties were also provided access to an additional \$12.8 million to fund outcome and system improvements consistent with the counties' self-improvement plans (SIPs).

Even more exciting is \$98.3 million which was included in this year's budget, for state fiscal year (SFY) 2006-07, for CWS System Improvements. These funds were allocated to counties to finance activities identified in the counties' self-improvement plans. An additional \$11.2 million was included to support additional administrative responsibilities associated with the planning and coordination of the periodic county self assessments and the annual county self-improvement plans. Funding was also included to assist counties in the peer quality case review process, to assist in caseloads, and in meeting additional costs associated with new data requirements. Finally, in addition to these funds, all counties were also provided access to an additional \$10.6 million to fund

outcome and system improvements through an application process to fund improvements identified through peer quality case reviews, self assessments and self improvement plans. We look forward to reporting next year on the results of this enhanced funding.

This year's major accomplishments in the implementation of the CWS System Improvements include the launching of or expanding Differential Response in targeted communities; the implementation of quality case planning strategies such as Team Decision Making (TDM), Permanency and Youth Transitional Protocols; and the implementation of the Standardized Safety Assessment System. For example, through the additional \$12.8 million provided to fund the outcome and system improvements for SFY 2005-06, three counties were funded to implement Structured Decision Making (SDM), 25 separate requests were funded to launch or expand Differential Response, and 41 requests for funds for improvements in permanency were funded. In addition, nine new counties implemented TDM.

Counties reported many lessons learned in implementing the CWS Improvements. One lesson learned by the counties was that they need to link tools to existing activities such as TDM in order to engage staff. Also, counties found that the multiple initiatives, such as the implementation of Family to Family and the Mental Health Services Act, need to be integrated to support mutual goals. In addition, the implementation of more than one initiative or system improvement makes it difficult to attribute improvements in outcomes to any one item. Counties also noted that significant time and energy is needed to encourage staff and to facilitate a shift in thought and practice.

This year the State Interagency (Children's) Team (SIT) continued to increase the number of agencies participating and also continued work on a variety of issues that impact children and families. The SIT is chaired by the CDSS, and is comprised of representatives overseeing programs effecting children from departments within the California Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), such as the California Department of Health Services, the California Department of Mental Health, the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs and the California Department of Developmental Services. In addition to those agencies, the California Department of Education, the California Employment Development Department, the California First 5 Commission, the California Workforce Investment Board, the California Department of Justice, the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts, and the Foundation Consortium also participated. The SIT is charged with reviewing cross-cutting issues for children and families, including supporting CWS System Improvements. Some of the important issues the SIT has been working on include the issue of confidentiality across systems to facilitate with information sharing, funding issues and access to services by families.

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care met in March 2006 to begin a study of one of the most critical issues facing the justice system – the need to quickly secure safe and permanent homes for California's children. Appointed by Chief Justice Ronald M. George, the representative Commission, chaired by California Supreme Court Justice Carlos R. Moreno, is made up of judges (including a tribal judge),

legislators, attorneys, representatives from CDSS, county social services and probation representatives, former foster youth, community leaders, and others who will explore the causes and consequences of court-based delays and make recommendations on how to improve the ability of courts to move children quickly out of foster care and into permanency. Christopher Wu, of the Administrative Office of the Courts, Judicial Council, is the Executive Director of this Commission.

A common core curriculum for line workers and supervisors has been developed, piloted and implemented across the state. The Statewide Common Core Curriculum was developed utilizing information obtained regarding current training practices, training needs and input from stakeholders to address the goals and objectives of the Child and Family Service Plan (CFSP). All new workers and supervisors now receive the standardized content in five priority areas. Over the past year, training was provided to line workers and supervisors on the Statewide Common Core Curriculum. The evaluation framework has also been implemented, and data is being collected for all new line workers and supervisors who complete common core training. (Please see the training section for more details.) The May Revision of the Governor's Budget contains \$5.9 million in State funds for additional training days for SFY 2006-07 for the common core curriculum.

California's new outcome based quality assurance system, the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR), serves as the starting point in the ongoing process of collecting, analyzing and applying data to hold the State accountable. After only two years after implementation, there is measurable statewide improvement in California's child welfare system. (Further information is provided in the Systemic Factors section of this report.) Next steps for the State and counties are to continue to track the data over time, and to come to a thorough understanding of the interaction between outcomes. In the next phase of this quality assurance system, more in-depth analyses can be performed to produce information that can help better guide policy and practice.

California's Child Welfare Services System: Overview

California's Child Welfare Services System: Overview

California's state-supervised child welfare system is administered at the local level by 58 counties, each governed by a county board of supervisors. While there are challenges inherent in the complexity of this type of system, its central strength lies in the flexibility afforded each county to determine how best to meet the needs of its own children and families. As the most populous state in the country, California's rich culture and ethnic diversity includes 224 languages and 109 federally recognized Indian tribes (and an estimated 40-50 non-federally recognized tribes). The State's counties differ widely by population; economic base; mix of urban, rural and suburban settings; and topographies that span desert, forest, mountain, coastal and inland valley formations. Within a single statutory and regulatory framework, these counties are charged with providing the full array of services necessary to meet the needs of at-risk children and families.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is the agency authorized by statute to promulgate regulations, policies and procedures necessary to implement the State's child welfare services (CWS) system and to ensure safety, permanency and well-being for California's children. The CDSS is responsible for the supervision and coordination of programs in California funded under federal Titles IV-B, IV-E, and XX of the Social Security Act. Furthermore, the CDSS is responsible for developing the State's Child and Family Services Plan. These efforts are all achieved within a framework of collaboration with child welfare stakeholders. Due to its complexity and this high degree of collaboration, California's child welfare system is ever changing as it seeks to improve its ability to meet the needs of the State's children and families.

The Children and Family Services Division (Division) of the CDSS plays a vital role in the development of policies and programs that implement the goals of CDSS' mission. Oversight of the State's CWS system is the responsibility of the Division. In developing policies and programs, the Division collaborates with other State and local agencies, tribal representatives, foster/kinship caregivers, foster youth, foster care service providers, community-based organizations, the Judicial Council, researchers, child advocates, the Legislature and private foundations to maximize families' opportunities for success.

Child Welfare Services (CWS) System

The CWS system is the primary intervention resource for child abuse and neglect in California. Existing law provides for child welfare services which are directed toward the accomplishment of the following purposes: protecting and promoting the welfare of all children, including handicapped, homeless and dependent children; preventing, remedying or assisting in the resolution of problems that contribute to the exploitation or delinquency of children; preventing the unnecessary separation of children from their families where the removal of the child(ren) can be prevented by identifying family needs; assisting families in resolving those issues that lead to child abuse and neglect;

reunifying families whose children have been removed, whenever possible by providing necessary services to the children and their families; maintaining family connections, when removal cannot be prevented by identifying children for whom tribal placement and relative placement are preferred and most appropriate and, finally, assuring permanence for dependent children, who cannot be returned home, by promoting the timely adoption, guardianship or alternative permanent placement for these children.

Oversight of California's CWS system is provided by the various branches of the CDSS Division:

- The Child Protection and Family Support Branch (CPFSB) has primary responsibility for the emergency response; pre-placement and in-home services policy components, including child abuse prevention and the Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration projects. The CPFS Branch is also responsible for statewide training and staff development activities of public child welfare service workers. The CPFSB includes oversight of statewide child abuse prevention and family support services. This component of the service delivery system is administered by the Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) within the CPFSB, and consists of a wide range of community-based services, including child abuse prevention and treatment services that promote the safety and well-being of children and families. These services are designed to increase family strengths and capacity to provide children with a stable and supportive family environment, and to also enhance child development. OCAP serves as a statewide center for public and private child abuse prevention, intervention and treatment programs and also administers programs funded under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), Community Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP), Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention & Treatment (CAPIT) and the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) Act.
- The Children Services Operations and Evaluation Branch is responsible for maintaining the integrity of child and family services by monitoring the uniform implementation of laws and regulations governing the provision of child welfare services by the 58 California counties. In addition, this branch has primary responsibility for the implementation of the CWS System Improvements; the C-CFSR; operating State Adoption District Offices and reviewing, maintaining, managing and ensuring the confidentiality of all California adoption records and providing post-adoption services.
- The Child and Youth Permanency (CYP) Branch supervises the delivery of services to children removed from their homes and placed into foster, kinship, adoptive or guardian families. The CYP Branch responsibilities include program management through regulation development and policy directives related to out-of-home care and permanency for dependent children; Independent Living Program; the implementation of the Family to Family Program; and foster parent training and recruitment.

- The Case Management System (CMS) Support Branch is responsible for providing support and oversight of the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS). The CWS/CMS is a personal computer (PC)-based Windows™ application that supports the case management business needs of all of California's child welfare social workers. As the CDSS' primary point of contact for CWS/CMS, the CMS Support Branch is responsible for facilitating the development of CWS programmatic changes and improvements to the system, pursuant to State and federal policy and regulation. The CMS Support Branch also works closely with the counties to assure programmatic consistency, clarity and to respond to collective county questions regarding system policy.
- The Foster Care Audits and Rates Branch is responsible for ensuring that children placed into foster care in group homes and by foster family agencies are receiving the services for which providers are being paid; that provider payment levels are established appropriately; that overpayments are minimized and that federal, State and county payment and funding systems are appropriately administered.

The following major components comprise the CWS system:

Prevention: service delivery and family engagement processes designed to mitigate the circumstances leading to child maltreatment before it occurs.

Emergency Response: a response system designed to provide in-person 24-hours-a-day response to reports of abuse, neglect or exploitation for the purpose of investigation; to determine the necessity for providing initial intake services and crisis intervention to maintain the child safely in his/her own home or to protect the safety of the child through emergency removal and foster care placement.

Family Maintenance: time-limited services that are designed to provide in-home protective services to prevent or remedy neglect, abuse or exploitation for the purpose of preventing the separation of children from their families.

Family Preservation: intensive services for families whose children, without such services, would be subject to risk of out-of-home placement, would remain in existing out-of-home placements for longer periods of time or would be placed in a more restrictive out-of-home placement.

Family Reunification: time-limited services to children in out-of-home care to prevent or remedy neglect, abuse or exploitation when the child cannot remain safely at home and needs temporary foster care while services are provided to reunite the family.

Foster Care: services designed to serve and protect those children who cannot remain in their homes. Current placement options include family homes (relative or foster family homes), certified homes of foster family agencies, and group homes. Foster care maintenance also includes payments to cover the cost of providing food, clothing,

shelter, daily supervision, school supplies, a child's personal incidentals and reasonable travel, including travel to the child's home for visitation.

Permanent Placement: alternative family structures for children who, because of abuse, neglect or exploitation, cannot remain safely at home and/or who are unlikely ever to return home. These services are provided when there has been a judicial determination of a permanent plan for adoption, legal guardianship (including the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment [KinGAP] Program), an independent living arrangement for adolescent children or other alternative permanent placement.

When adoption is the permanent plan for a child, the potential adoptive family is home studied, approved and the child is placed with the family. Services include recruitment of potential adoptive parents; financial assistance to adoptive parents to aid in the support of special needs children; direct relinquishment and independent adoption.

Independent Living: education and services for foster youth based on an assessment of needs and designed to help youth transition successfully from foster care to living independently. Services are provided to enhance necessary basic living skills, as well as career development skills.

**PIP Outcome:
Safety**

Safety

Safety for children is an important part of the State's vision for children and families and a measurable outcome of the State's child welfare services (CWS) system. California strives to ensure that children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect and that they are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Child Safety Outcomes

Over the last two decades, California has experienced high numbers of child abuse reports that have grown increasingly complex and challenging to the CWS system's capacity to effectively respond. The complexity of the issues facing child welfare families reaches beyond the CWS system's ability to handle alone and requires participation by other partners who have responsibility in these same areas. Thus the emphasis of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) herein is on system reform and collaborative action.

For the purposes of this Annual Progress Service Report (APSR), the program improvement goals from the prior year report have been identified as objectives and cover the period from July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006.

OBJECTIVE 1: The State's objective is to reach the target of 8.9% in the rate of repeat maltreatment of children. (Safety Outcome 1, Item 2A.)

California met the improvement goal of 8.9% as reported in the previous APSR of FFY 2005. The CDSS remains committed to further improvements in this objective and continues to measure progress in this area on a quarterly basis. As of the September 2005 quarter, this measure is 8.7 %.

Some of the 11 counties piloting the Child Welfare System Improvements were able to provide some preliminary data about the implementation of Differential Response and the impact on repeat maltreatment. The information is limited to what each pilot county can access through its available data systems. In addition, as counties have implemented Differential Response less than a year ago, the information gathered is only preliminary. Although Differential Response has been implemented only in certain areas or for certain populations, counties have already been able to see positive results. For example, many counties found that a number of the families served through Differential Response had never before received community or county services.

Los Angeles reported that the County served 2,605 children through Differential Response using a Path 1 or 2 response. Of these children only 68, or less than 0.3%, were the subject of a subsequent referral for abuse or neglect. Placer County also reported similar outcomes. Out of the 240 children who were served by Placer County between March 2004 and June 2005 through Differential Response, only 3 children (less than 1%) had a recurrence of maltreatment.

OBJECTIVE 2: The State's objective is to decrease two percentage points in the rate of recurrence of abuse or neglect in cases where children are not removed from the home. (Safety Outcome 2, Items 3 & 4.)

The CDSS continues to analyze this measure to determine the accuracy of the data and factors that may impact the outcome. Some of the steps taken include reviewing the measure to ensure that it was a correct gauge of the items. The CDSS, the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) and UC Berkeley have all been working to analyze this item, and have met on a regular basis. We are working on understanding not only the data, but the policy implications for this measure.

As stated in the letter sent to Region IX on July 21, 2006, the State has been concerned with this measure throughout the PIP. The State data review team completed an extensive review of the methodology and data sources that comprise the performance measure. We have determined that there were technical problems both in the way data tables were joined together to capture the data and incorrect tables were used in the calculation. Based on corrections made to this measure, we recalculated the performance measure back to the beginning of the PIP, which resulted in a dramatic change to this performance indicator. Subject to Federal concurrence with the revised methodology, the State requested in the letter that your office consider that we have passed this PIP target. Pursuant to the reply dated August 18, 2006, we will be providing additional information and discussing the request.

OBJECTIVE 3: The State's objective is to reach the target of 0.53% in the data indicator for child abuse or neglect in foster care based on the existing data indicator. (Safety Outcome 1, Item 2B.)

This benchmark has been met. CDSS and Region IX agreed to a revised target of .57% for this measure, which is the national standard.

The CDSS identified an error in the way this measure was being computed. Similar to the correction for the Recurrence of Maltreatment measure that Region IX approved in 2005, CDSS determined that some factors were also inappropriately included in the computations for this measure. As part of this correction, CDSS applied the same methodology back to the 2000 base year in order to consistently track improvement over the course of the PIP. Region IX approved the revised method/baseline data.

The CDSS analyzed this recomputed performance data going back to the baseline and the change lowered the rate of abuse in out-of-home care. Of particular importance, however, is that California met the target as of the December 2004 quarter. According to the recomputed data and Region IX staff's verbal instructions, California's new baseline as of September 2003 is .58%. For the December 2004 quarter, the recomputed rate is .56%. Therefore, the State has passed this measure. Final approval from Region IX was received on March 20, 2006.

Work is continuing on the development of a tool to assess the needs of substitute care providers, which will aid counties in assessing what services and supports a resource family might need in order to meet the needs of a specific child. The CDSS and counties are working with the Children's Research Center on the assessment, and a field test is planned to begin in August 2006.

The All County Letter, 06-15, regarding the requirements for the investigation of abuse allegations for probation youth in out-of-home care was released in August 2006. A process for investigations and for reporting the information in CWS/CMS was created with the help of the Chief Probation Officers Association and the County Welfare Directors Association.

Benchmarks:

By June 30, 2006, CDSS will, based on the experience of the 11 counties, make recommendations to the Administration and Legislature via the State budget process regarding phasing in additional counties to begin implementation of the Standardized Safety Assessment System.

This benchmark has been met. The CDSS recommended to both the Administration and the Legislature that additional counties begin implementation of the Standardized Safety Assessment System.

By June 30, 2006, CDSS will report, in the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR), its findings and plans for the appropriate next steps regarding the phasing in of additional counties to begin implementation of the Standardized Safety Assessment System or the elimination of this strategy to achieve the objectives for this goal.

This benchmark has been met. Currently, there are only 16 counties in the State that are not using one of the two State approved models to record assessment information (SDM and CAT). The CDSS requested funding from the Legislature to be able to expand these tools to the remaining counties in SFY 2006-07. Funding is included in the Governor's budget for SFY 2006-07 for continued implementation of the Standardized Safety Assessment System in order that all counties will implement the System by June 30, 2007. This exceeds our goal of adding 15 counties to the initial pilot counties.

Counties implemented the Standardized Safety Assessment System countywide. They received, and continue to receive, in-person technical assistance from the two contractors, as well as from CDSS, and also via phone and e-mail.

By June 30, 2006, CDSS will, based on the experience of the total participating counties, and the approval of the Administration and Legislature via the State budget process, begin phasing in 15 additional

counties to begin implementation of the Standardized Safety Assessment System.

This benchmark has been met. See above.

By June 30, 2005, a minimum of 11 counties will have implemented and begun validation of a consistent approach to the assessment of safety, risk, protective capacity and family strengths.

This benchmark has been met. The 11 pilot counties implemented the Safety Assessment System on June 30, 2005. Two models are being utilized to record the assessment information. Seven of the pilot counties worked with the Children's Research Center to modify the existing Structured Decision Making (SDM) tools to ensure that all elements were captured. These revised tools were rolled out to all counties using SDM in March 2006. The remaining four pilot counties worked with the Sphere Institute and developed the Comprehensive Assessment Tools (CAT), which were implemented June 30, 2005. Both sets of tools include the response paths for Differential Response.

The CDSS, in collaboration with the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), determined that the most cost-effective approach to evaluation of the CWS system improvements would be to establish a single evaluation process for the entire pilot. A preliminary evaluation and report will be issued by June 2006. This will be followed by a full evaluation in SFY 2007-08.

By June 30, 2005, the CDSS will have established a uniform screening system that utilizes the safety, risk and family protective capacity assessment process, and establishes criteria for each Differential Response path.

This benchmark has been met. Counties in the 11 county pilot implemented the new Safety Assessment System on June 30, 2005. Child safety is being addressed throughout the time that a child is involved with the child welfare system. The Child and Family Policy Institute of California conducted a survey to collect preliminary information from the 11 pilot counties about their experiences of developing, planning, testing and implementing the new Safety Assessment System as part of the 11 county pilot evaluation. The counties reported that "the new Safety Assessment System allowed them to make better and more consistent decisions regarding the safety of children. It also allowed ready and easy access to the information on each case that was necessary for making decision about the effective delivery of services to children and families. In addition, they reported the new process has had a positive impact resulting in improving relationships with community partners and families."

By June 30, 2005, each of the 11 counties will have developed the community resource capacity to respond to service referrals in targeted communities.

This benchmark has been met. The 11 counties developed community resource capacity to be able to implement Differential Response in targeted areas. The CDSS, in collaboration with CWDA, is continuing to work to support network expansion and resource development statewide, particularly in rural areas. Counties have noted that many families need substance abuse, mental health, financial and educational/vocational services. It is important that all the county systems that serve these families work together to provide the services needed. Counties also observed that the State needs to continue to work to secure additional funding for more prevention and pre-placement services in order to support Differential Response services and activities, including those provided by community based organizations.

By June 30, 2005, a minimum of 11 counties will have begun the implementation and validation of the Differential Response Intake Structure in specific, targeted communities.

This benchmark has been met. The 11 pilot counties met their June 30, 2005, target date for implementation of Differential Response in targeted communities and/or identified populations. The Child and Family Policy Institute of California survey provided information into how the 11 pilot counties and their community partners have been able to address the problems of families in need who would otherwise have not received services, and thus were successful in addressing issues such as employment and substance abuse. For example, during 2005, Contra Costa County provided Differential Response services to 202 families (with over 400 children), linking them to resources and services that they otherwise would not have received.

The counties reported that the new Differential Response system allowed them to engage families in a meaningful way and families were more responsive to their interventions. Relationships with community partners were developed in the implementation of this new system and, as a result, resources for families have been maximized.

The Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) provided training this year and technical assistance to the 11 pilot counties (as well as to 31 non-pilot counties) on how to implement this new system. They have tested numerous aspects of the Differential Response System as they begin to make refinements. In the current fiscal year, expert "faculty" members of the BSC have been directing their technical assistance to specific issues identified within each county. In addition, a peer mentoring system has been implemented. The process matches counties which are further along in implementing Differential Response to work with counties that have requested assistance in implementing Differential Response.

The BSC, along with other technical assistance from the State, continue to provide the counties with information and support as they implement the Differential Response System.

The Differential Response Workgroup is continuing to examine whether statutory or regulatory change will be necessary in the future.

By January 30, 2006, CDSS will, based on the experience of the 11 counties, have determined and evaluated the factors (cost, statutory and/or regulatory changes, practice changes, resources: staffing/funding/community support, etc.) necessary to implement the Differential Response Intake Structure in additional counties.

This benchmark has been met. The CDSS has recommended to the Administration and Legislature that additional counties begin implementation of the Differential Response Intake Structure.

By June 30, 2006, CDSS will, based on the evaluation of implementation experience of the 11 counties, make recommendations to the administration and legislature via the State budget process, regarding phasing in additional counties to begin implementation of the Differential Response Intake Structure.

This benchmark has been met. The CDSS has recommended to the Administration and Legislature that additional counties begin implementation of the Differential Response Intake Structure.

By June 30, 2006, CDSS will report, in the Annual Progress and Services Report, its findings and plans for the appropriate next steps regarding the phasing in of additional counties to begin implementation of the Differential Response Intake Structure or the elimination of this strategy to achieve the objectives for this goal.

This benchmark has been met. The CDSS requested funding from the Legislature to be able to expand the Differential Response Intake Structure to additional counties in SFY 2006-07. Funding is included in the Governor's budget for SFY 2006-07 for continued implementation of the Differential Response Intake Structure to additional sites. In addition to the 11 pilot counties who implemented Differential Response by June 30, 2005, 16 counties in SFY 2005-06 requested and received funding through CWS Outcome Improvement funds to implement or expand existing Differential Response programs.

By June 30, 2006, if implementation is identified as appropriate and doable, and budgeted in the State Budget, CDSS will begin phasing in an additional 15 counties to implement the Differential Response Intake Structure.

This benchmark has been met. See above.

Other Efforts

- This year, the State Interagency (Children's) Team (SIT) continued its collaboration on a variety of issues. The SIT is chaired by the CDSS and comprised of representatives overseeing programs affecting children from departments within the California Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA), as well as the California Department of Education, California Employment Development Department, the California Workforce Investment Board, the California First 5 Commission, the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts and the Foundation Consortium. The SIT is charged with looking at cross-cutting issues for children including supporting CWS System Improvements. Technical assistance through the National Resource Centers (NRCs) on some of these issues may be requested.

The SIT developed shared goals for 2006 with work plan priorities. There are seven goals which the group has decided to address directly. These are to: 1) Increase access to and delivery of mental health services, including prevention and early intervention services, to children and youth of all ages with various situational characteristics and vulnerable populations, i.e., child welfare involvement, children ages 0 to 5, juvenile justice and education; 2) Increase the public mental health's capacity to offer culturally and linguistically competent services, with culturally competent institutions, agencies and professionals; 3) More consistently provide mental health, health, education and alcohol and other drug (AOD) services as needed to foster children placed out-of-county, by resolving jurisdictional issues, with a special focus on mental health services; 4) Provide high-wage high-growth training for young adults and family members; 5) Strengthen services to children and families where there is a nexus between AOD and child safety, education and workforce readiness/success, maternal/child health and mental health; 6) Develop State enriched core set of indicators of child and family well-being for the California Child Welfare Outcomes and Accountability System, including the potential for using outcomes data from systems other than CWS/CMS, such as health, education, and substance abuse treatment and; 7) Overcome real and perceived legal barriers to local public and private agencies that want to share "confidential" information about common clients to strengthen screening, referral and integrated service delivery. In addition, there are other goals to be considered in the latter part of the year.

- A work group created by the SIT is the Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Workgroup. The workgroup is comprised of representatives from Department of Alcohol and Drug Program, Department of Health Services, Department of Mental Health, CDSS, Department of Education, Department of Development Services and California's First 5 Commission. The workgroup meets monthly, and has created a work plan to work on common issues. Some of the activities

in the work plan focus on improving the collection of data on substance abuse by families in the child welfare, health and education systems; assisting/encouraging county agencies to develop consent forms and interagency protocols for information sharing and data collection; and assisting counties in estimating substance abuse treatment needs for child welfare families.

- The Barrier Busters Interagency Team (BBIT) was commissioned by the SIT and stems from recommendations in the CWS Stakeholders Redesign Report to develop fiscal strategies that support services for children, youth and families served through (or at risk of entering) the CWS program that are also eligible for and/or receive services from other agencies. The BBIT acts as a technical advisory group, and also explores interagency funding opportunities and fiscal strategies that can improve the provision of services and outcomes for children, youth and families. Some of the issues discussed to date have included restrictions imposed by new federal rules for claiming of Title IV-E administrative costs, Proposition 63/Mental Health Services Act funding opportunities, child care funding for Foster Parents, private agency contracting for Title IV-E Administration, Case Management activities of children at risk of foster care, and use of other funds including Title XX, Targeted Case Management (TCM), Medical Administrative Activities (MAA), etc. The BBIT met monthly during 2005 to develop and recommend strategies for improving collaborative funding processes at both the State and local levels. The BBIT last convened on November 9, 2005. While no meetings of the BBIT have been scheduled thus far for 2006, the SIT may become more directional in the future by specifying areas of BBIT focus.

The BBIT has contracted with the University of California, Davis, to hold six training sessions and two fiscal forums relevant to fiscal essentials for children's services. The *Fiscal Essentials for Children's Services* are trainings designed to improve services to vulnerable children and families via improved funding and fiscal claiming strategies. The statewide trainings for this year began in March 2005, and continued into 2006. The *Fiscal Essentials for Children's Services Forum* provides an opportunity for county, state child welfare and related agencies to join together to learn and share information on new ways to fund children's services. Additionally, a website was developed that contains questions and answers generated by the *Fiscal Essentials* training sessions and forums. The website address is:

www.humanservices.uc.davis.edu/fiscalacademy .

- An additional workgroup newly created by the SIT is the Core Indicator Workgroup. This workgroup has been created to develop a state enriched core set of indicators of child and family well-being for the California Outcomes and Accountability System. This includes the potential use of outcome data from systems other than child welfare, such as health, education, substance abuse treatment, etc. The CDSS and the State Department of Mental Health are co-

leading the workgroup, and the Departments of Health Services, Education, Developmental Services, and Alcohol and Drug Programs are also participating.

Cross agency indicators will encourage shared accountability for improved outcomes for shared populations. However, various data systems have not been designed to produce outcomes data or to transfer data easily across systems. This is a long-term effort, which presents both opportunities and challenges. The CDSS, through their contract with University of California, Davis, will coordinate the analysis of relevant SIT member agencies' key outcomes, indicator and data systems, and with the assistance of appropriate staff from those agencies will work to identify the potential for using the data for the Outcomes and Accountability System.

- This year, the CDSS continued work with the 10 largest counties (see glossary) to discuss specific strategies that have been implemented in the areas of safety, permanence and well-being that have resulted in good performance outcomes. A conference call was held on March 21, 2006, with the counties to specifically discuss what best practices/strategies the counties have implemented which resulted in high performance in the areas of the federal Safety Outcomes 3 and 4, and in Permanency Outcomes 5 and 6. Other conference calls and meetings have been held in regards to Safety Outcomes 3 and 4, which are discussed in a previous section.
- As reported in the last APSR, Assembly Bill (AB) 2795 (Chapter 322, Statutes of 2004) containing CDSS' legislative proposals to extend the time to develop a case plan from 30 days to 60 days and also to extend Family Maintenance services was signed into law on August 30, 2004. The bill permits additional time to involve the child, family and others important in the child's life to participate in case planning. The CDSS issued an initial All County Letter (ACL) (05-07), which notified counties about the provisions of the legislation, and informed them that the provision to extend Family Maintenance services was effective January 1, 2005. AB 2795 permits a delay in the implementation of its provisions until modifications are made to the CWS/CMS application. However, CDSS has deemed that the planned modifications are not necessary for the implementation of this change. A second ACL (06-07) was issued in April 2006, notifying counties that the maximum time available for completing a written case plan may be extended up to 60 days.
- In July 2003, as part of California's PIP, the CDSS convened a workgroup to develop a proposal for a consolidated home study. This consolidated home study would replace the existing separate processes and requirements for foster care licensing, relative and non-related extended family members' approval and adoption home studies all into a single process, using a single standard for approval. The workgroup included representatives from the CWDA, various counties and CDSS Divisions including Legal Affairs, Community Care Licensing and Children and Family Services.

In May 2004, the workgroup presented a detailed framework for a proposed consolidated home study to CWDA and CDSS. After consideration, both organizations agreed to further develop the proposal and to address some of the more difficult aspects: costs, staffing qualifications, conflict of interest, treatment of existing licensees, due process, etc. The joint CWDA/CDSS workgroup convened in May 2005 to discuss proceeding with a legislative proposal for authority to pilot a consolidated home study process.

In June 2005, CDSS renegotiated this PIP Action Step timetable and desired results with federal representatives and agreed to continue working with CWDA to forward a legislative proposal to implement a consolidated home study pilot. CDSS also reviewed existing county efforts to integrate the existing separate licensing/approval processes and requirements.

In February 2006, a spot bill, AB 2161, was introduced in the Legislature. This bill requires CDSS, in consultation with stakeholders and other interested parties, to develop and implement a pilot program in up to five counties to establish a resource family approval process that would replace the existing separate and duplicative processes for licensing foster family homes, approving relatives and non-related extended family members, and approving adoptive families. The bill has been heard in both Houses and is continuing to make its way through the legislative process.

The joint CDSS/CWDA workgroup continues to meet monthly to develop in greater detail the requirements of the proposed pilot program. The CDSS continues to communicate progress and concerns regarding the pilot with its Region IX partners.

PIP Outcome: Permanence

Permanence

Permanence for children is one of California's primary goals; specifically, permanence in a home in which the child is safe and can grow into a healthy stable adult. The state of California and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) are committed to ensuring that children have permanence and stability in their living situations, continuity of family relationships and on-going connections to family, friends, community and racial heritage. Further, the CDSS is dedicated to ensuring that, for children who cannot remain safely in their homes, reunification, adoption, guardianship, alternative permanent placement or transition from foster care to independent living occurs in a timely manner.

Objective 1: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to reach the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) target of decreasing the rate of children re-entering foster care within 12 months of reunification to 9.4%. (PIP Permanency Outcome 1, Item 5.)

Re-entry into Foster Care within 12 months of a previous placement episode is an area that has shown little movement over the course of the PIP despite practice and resource improvements. The State data review team analyzed this area and determined that several factors have contributed to the lack of improvement in this performance measure. The team has determined that the Child Welfare Services/Case Management System is reporting cases where the child exited and re-entered the system within 24 hours, which we have determined to be system input errors, such as the closing of a case from Dependency and the reopening as a Probation case on the same day. This has resulted in an overstatement of 10.82 percent in the State Foster Care re-entry rate which, when corrected, we believe results in the State surpassing the PIP target of 9.4 percent.

In order to officially recognize this improvement for purposes of the PIP, the re-entry rate must be reported from the Federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). Therefore, the State has requested approval from our Regional Office for this methodology and to change our November AFCARS submission to accurately report California's data. Pursuant to the reply dated August 18, 2006, we will be providing additional information and discussing the request further.

Objective 2: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to reach the PIP target to increase the percentage of children who have two or fewer foster care placements in the first year of their latest removal by 3.8 percentage points. (PIP Permanency Outcome 1, Item 6.)

The State has performed extensive analysis of this data element which eventually resulted in more accurate data; however, it also resulted in a federal recalculation of the base. Based on this recalculation, the new target is 86.7%, which is also the current national standard. The same issues identified as problems in reporting the State re-entry rate needed to be corrected for the stability performance indicator. The result is

that UC Berkeley now reports that the State exceeded our PIP target of 86.7 percent, which is the National Standard, as of the quarter ending June 30, 2005.

In order to officially recognize this improvement for purposes of the PIP, this must be verified by the corrected November AFCARS report. Therefore, the State has requested approval from our Regional Office for this methodology and to change our November AFCARS submission to accurately report California's data. Pursuant to the reply dated August 18, 2006, we will be providing additional information and discussing the request further.

Objective 3: The State's objective is to reach the PIP target to improve the timely establishment of appropriate permanency goals from 70.4%. (PIP Permanency Outcome 1, Item 7.)

California met the improvement goal of 70.4% as reported in the previous APSR of FFY 2005. The most recent data for the quarter ending September 2005 indicates that we are at 75.4%, which demonstrates steady improvement in the measure. The CDSS remains committed to further improvements in this objective and will continue to measure progress in this area on a quarterly basis.

Objective 4: By June 30, 2009, the State's objective is to achieve a minimum statewide improvement over June 2004 data of 2.88 percentage points or better, in the proportion of children who exited to reunification and did so within 12 months of the latest removal¹. (PIP Permanency Outcome 1, Item 8.)

California met the PIP objective in this area on December 2003. The most recent data for the quarter ending September 2005 indicates that we are at 66.6%, which indicates steady improvement in the measure.

Objective 5: By June 30, 2009, the State has set an overall objective of a minimum statewide improvement over June 2004 data of 1.34 percentage points or better, in proportion of children who exited to adoption and did so within 24 months.² (PIP Permanency Outcome 1, Item 9.)

California met the PIP objective in this area on December 2003. The most recent data for the quarter ending September 2005 indicates that we are at 29.1%, which indicates steady improvement in the measure.

Objective 6: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to reach the PIP target to reduce the proportion of children with a goal of long-term foster care at two years after entry to 31.3%. (PIP Permanency Outcome 1, Item 10.)

¹ This represents a statistically significant change from the baseline period of June 2004.

² This represents a statistically significant change from the baseline period of June 2004.

California met the improvement goal of 31.3% as reported in the previous APSR of FFY 2005. The most recent data for the quarter ending September 2005 indicates that we are at 29.4%, which indicates steady improvement in this measure.

Objective 7: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to reach the PIP target to increase from the baseline survey by three percentage points, the percentage of children whose primary connections are preserved. (PIP Permanency Outcome 2, Item 14.)

California has shown improvement in this measure, but has not yet achieved the goal. The CDSS used a statewide statistically valid survey that established a baseline performance level for Permanency Outcome 1, Item 14. Progress is assessed using subsequent surveys to compare to the baseline performance. The initial, second and third surveys have been completed. However, the survey process has not yet been completed. Pursuant to federal instructions, the State will have up to 12 non-overlapping months to show that actions implemented during the PIP are impacting the data. The new date to determine goal achievement is September 2006. The State will conduct one additional statistically valid survey to attempt to demonstrate sufficient progress to pass the outcome prior to the due date of our final report of April 2, 2007.

Objective 8: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to reach the PIP target that Family to Family (see glossary) will be available in those counties whose caseload combined represents 60% of the CWS caseload statewide. (PIP Systemic Factor 2, Item 25.)

California met the improvement goal for this systemic factor. The CDSS remains committed to further improvements in this area and will continue to measure progress.

Objective 9: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to reach the PIP target to decrease the proportion of children in care for 17 of the most recent 22 months without a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR), by 2%. (PIP Systemic Factor 2, Item 28.)

California met the improvement goal for this systemic factor. The target for Item 28 was 87.5%. As of the 3rd quarter of 2005, the most recent data available, the State is at 86.1% for this measure, and continues to exceed the target. The CDSS remains committed to further improvements in this area and will continue to measure progress.

Benchmarks

By June 30, 2005, the CDSS will have developed and implemented quality case planning and service delivery protocols that include team-based approaches to promote family engagement, such as team decision-making, family conferencing, etc., for targeted cases in each of the 11 pilot counties.

By June 30, 2005, the CDSS, in partnership with the 11 pilot counties, will have developed and implemented protocols to include children and youth in case and transition planning.

These benchmarks have been met. A survey of the counties administered by the Child and Family Policy Institute of California provides insight into the 11 pilot counties' experience of integrating an individualized, inclusive, team-based case planning process for supporting family restoration and transitional youth planning. Counties developed county implementation plans for each strategy, trained staff in family engagement, and engaged community partners, families and youth in planning and implementation.

In responding to the survey, counties "reported numerous successes related to including families and youth in case planning. Not only did this new approach improve outcomes for children and youth, it offered opportunities to overcome barriers in establishing permanency and enhanced and strengthened their relationships with families, youth and members of the community." At least one county reported that the number of contested court hearings dropped off after implementing some of the family and youth involvement strategies from the Permanency and Youth Transitional Protocols. Finally, while youth engagement takes time, for some counties it has decreased behavior problems and resulted in a reduction of youth in long term out-of-home care.

Counties also reported that while TDM is effective, it "requires staff (training) and a new skill set that takes time to develop." In addition, "many counties discovered the value of community partners engaging families and making initiative connections. They reported numerous benefits from privately funded programs such as the California Permanency for Youth Project that provided technical assistance for permanency programs."

Counties implemented TDMs for targeted areas or groups. For example, Contra Costa County implemented TDMs for children with multiple placements. They also implemented TDMs for all African American children throughout the county under age 5 in an effort to address racial disproportionality. Glenn County implemented TDMs for children at risk of removal and for initial removals. Humboldt County implemented TDMs for placement disruptions, family reunification and emergency response. Stanislaus County implemented TDMs for all placement changes and all removal decisions. Tehama implemented TDMs for all placement changes and emancipation conferences for all youth age 16 or older.

Los Angeles County implemented TDMs for children at risk of removal and for initial removals, which they estimate prevented the removal of 1,212 children. Of the 465 children who were removed, more than half were placed with relatives. The County also held 132 emancipation conferences with youth, family members, caregivers and community partners to make emancipation and transitional living plans.

By June 30, 2006, CDSS will, based on the experience of the total participating counties, begin phasing in an additional 15 counties to implement the quality case planning and service delivery protocols.

This benchmark has been met. The CDSS requested funding from the Legislature to be able to expand the quality case planning and service delivery protocols to additional counties in SFY 2006-07. Funding is included in the Governor's budget for SFY 2006-07 for continued implementation of the protocols to additional sites. In addition to the 11 pilot counties who implemented Differential Response by June 30, 2005, 41 counties in SFY 2005-06 requested and received funding through CWS Outcome Improvement funds to implement or expand permanency improvements.

Other Efforts

- The Family to Family Initiative is in various phases of implementation throughout California. Partners under the California initiative include the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Stuart Foundation, the Walter S. Johnson Foundation and the CDSS. Families are supported by this initiative by improving safety of the placement and by having families, including the child when appropriate, participate in the TDM process.
- The California Family to Family counties are divided into four cluster groups based on the implementation status of their initiative. Los Angeles County is divided into three cluster groups based on their Service Planning Areas. The foundations and the CDSS provide technical assistance to counties with their Family to Family implementation through expert consultants. The four strategies of the Family to Family Model are: Recruiting, Training and Supporting Resource Families; Building Community Partnerships; Team Decision-Making and Self Evaluation.
- In 2005, nine additional California Family to Family counties were trained on and implemented TDMs: Glenn, Humboldt, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, Tehama, Trinity and Ventura. San Diego County began their TDM implementation in January 2006. Kern and Solano counties are scheduled to implement TDMs in fall of 2006. As of December 31, 2005, 22 of the 24 Family to Family counties are using the TDM core strategy. Each of the four Family to Family cluster groups meet twice a year for a convening/training and are assigned an Annie E. Casey Foundation Technical Assistant for each of the core strategies, which includes TDMs.
- As of December 2004, approximately 88% of the 85,286 children in child welfare supervised foster care in California live in a Family to Family county. California is looking at ways to expand the number of counties participating.
- Effective December 2005, the CDSS entered into an interagency agreement with the Judicial Council of California to create the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Full

Compliance Project. While the agreement's end date is June 2006, the agreement is expected to be renewed for one-to-three years. The project was created because Indian children continue to be removed from their families and tribal communities and placed with non-Indian caregivers. While juvenile court judges and placing agency staff have received some training on ICWA, this project presents an opportunity to provide targeted training and technical assistance in order to increase knowledge of ICWA by making available a range of facilitation and training services through cross-disciplinary regional trainings of judicial officers, attorneys, social workers and probation officers. Services will be tailored to the needs of the local county or region and protocols will be developed to assure a more complete understanding of the requirements of ICWA. These protocols may include checklists for agencies to follow the law covering identification of an Indian child, services to Indian children and families, notice procedures, description and expectation of active efforts and placement preferences for Indian children. Educational workshops will be provided by a broad-based group of subject matter experts on a statewide, regional and local basis. This project will impact, not only the preservation of connections for Indian children, but also achieving permanency, as defined by the Indian community.

One regional symposium on ICWA, the Central California Regional Symposium, was held in Fresno on November 15, 2005. This symposium focused on the nuts-and-bolts of applying ICWA in dependency and delinquency cases. There were more than 180 attendees, including numerous county counsel, court officers, child welfare and probation staff, as well as tribal representatives. The evaluations received were very positive.

One of the key speakers at the symposium was Justice William Thorne, Utah Court of Appeals. He is recognized as a foremost authority on ICWA, and is requested to speak at numerous conferences/symposia/gatherings nationwide. A video has been made of his presentation, "An Historical and Cultural Perspective on ICWA," and is available for use by any interested party.

Resource binders have been created for the three symposia that have been conducted, two in 2005 and one in 2006. The resource binders were made available to all participants; this resource information is also available on CD and has been posted on the Judicial Council's website located at: <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/programs/description/jrta-ICWAResourceBinder.htm> . As new information is identified, it will be added to the resources.

Compliance Project staff presented a workshop, entitled "Current Issues in Practice under the Indian Child Welfare Act," at the annual Beyond the Bench Conference. This conference is the largest statewide conference for courts, state agencies, county child welfare and probation agencies, attorneys and children's advocates. The workshop was a success with approximately 100 in attendance, one of the larger turnouts for a workshop at the conference.

The Compliance Project had the opportunity to work with the Riverside County Tribal Alliance for Indian Children and Families. This Alliance consists of representatives from the county courts, child welfare agency, tribes, tribal organizations and tribal advocates. As a result, the Alliance has clearer direction in how to continue collaborating with all involved parties to ensure the protection of Indian families and children.

Further, the Judicial Council has completed the "Judicial Handbook on ICWA." This handbook explains the requirements of ICWA and provides guidance to the courts regarding compliance. It is being distributed to all of the local courts in the State.

- The CDSS continues to monitor counties' progress on their system improvement plans related to concurrent planning, as well as in other areas. Counties who undergo a Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR) may identify issues, such as concurrent planning, in which they would desire technical assistance. We anticipate in the coming year that some counties will request technical assistance from the National Resource Centers through CDSS.

As detailed in the Systemic Factors Section, several counties were scheduled to participate in the PQCR process during SFY 2005-06. Nine counties focused their PQCR to examine the issue of improving the time to reunification; five counties focused on decreasing the number of foster care re-entries; two counties focused on improving placement stability; and one county focused on improving the length of time to adoption.

- Funding of \$2.5 million is included in the Governor's budget for SFY 2006-07 to augment the Kinship Support Services Program which provides services to caregivers who provide for their relative children within their familiar family settings to ensure safe, stable and permanent placements for children at risk. This funding will be allocated on a competitive basis to counties that are able to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of this program and generate future savings.
- In order to further facilitate connections and permanence, last year CDSS budgeted for and had begun implementation of Assembly Bill (AB) 408 (Chapter 813, Statutes of 2003), which dealt with efforts to identify, evaluate and assess relationships between foster children and other important people in their lives. AB 1412 (Chapter 640, Statutes of 2005) was subsequently passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor on October 7, 2005, to ensure that children and youth are actively involved in their case plan and permanency planning process as age and developmentally appropriate. The Governor's budget for SFY 2006-07 includes \$7.7 million for the implementation of AB 1412. AB 1412 created a phased-in expansion of requirements that county social workers ask children 10 years of age or older, beginning with those children placed with a non-relative, about important adult relationships and to make efforts to support those

relationships. AB 1412 also required a court determination whether the agency has made reasonable efforts to maintain the child's relationships with individuals, other than the child's siblings, who are important to the child and consistent with the child's best interests. These two legislative measures mesh well with the CWS Improvement efforts to increase child and family engagement in the case planning process as well as other permanency measures.

- In order to further improve adoption outcomes, during SFY 2006-07, funding will be provided to augment county adoption funding to improve permanency outcomes for children via adoption and increased foster care exits. The hiring of additional adoption caseworkers is expected to produce an additional 1,000 adoption finalizations; this increase in adoptions will represent a 15.5% increase over actual adoptions finalized during FY 2003-04.
- California's new Blue Ribbon Commission on Children in Foster Care met for the first time on March 23, 2006, to begin a study of one of the most critical issues facing the justice system today – the need to quickly secure safe and permanent homes for California's children. Appointed by Chief Justice Ronald M. George, the representative commission, chaired by California Supreme Court Justice Carlos R. Moreno, is made up of judges (including a tribal judge), legislators, attorneys, representatives from CDSS, county social services and probation representatives, former foster youth, community leaders and others with broad expertise. The commission will explore the causes and consequences of court-based delays and make recommendations on how to improve the ability of courts to move children quickly out of the legal limbo of foster care. Specifically, the Commission is committed to:
 1. Improving the ability of the federal government, the State, local agencies, and the courts to more quickly secure safe, permanent homes for foster children and at the same time to reduce the need for foster care.
 2. Establishing a permanent collaborative framework among all those who have responsibility for the well-being for vulnerable children.
 3. Developing strategies for applying resources in more flexible ways to support children and families while persuading the federal government to invest more effectively and to lift restrictions on how money can be spent by the State.
 4. Targeting further improvements in the performance of the courts where often the most critical life decisions are made.

The Youth Transition Action Team Initiative (YTAT)

The Youth Transition Action Team Initiative (YTAT) focuses on bringing together the resources of the workforce, education and child welfare systems to better prepare

adolescents who are current or former foster youth to achieve economic, educational and employment success as they transition into the adult world.

Transition Act Teams are made up of leaders from the child welfare, education, philanthropy, workforce development and other local systems working together to improve transition outcomes for youth touched by the child welfare system. Each team is also charged with assisting its respective county in achieving their child welfare system enhancement goals, particularly in the area of youth permanency.

Teams from across the state are bringing together and leveraging the approaches, strategies, and resources of multiple efforts concerned with the issue of successful youth transition. They are assessing their current capacity to address the needs of foster and kinship youth, developing practical and outcome-based work plans, aligning local resources and programs to meet the needs of foster and kinship youth, and then putting those plans into action. YTAT impacts will be measured by success in improving outcomes for youth aging out of the foster care system in educational achievement and aspiration; workforce readiness and employment and also support networks.

Counties that are currently participating in the initiative are Colusa, Glenn, Humboldt, Los Angeles, Placer, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Tehama and Ventura. More information may be found at the following web sites: <http://www.nwww.org/initiatives/ytat.html> and at <http://www.newwaystowork.org/initiatives/ytat/current.html>

California Connected by 25 Initiative

In California, the Connected by 25 Initiative (CC25I) supports a group of California counties in building a comprehensive continuum of services that support foster youth who are transitioning to adulthood, ages 14-24 years. The CC25I is a fifth strategy under the California Family to Family Initiative.

The CC25I aims to accomplish the following objectives: 1) provide financial, technical and administrative assistance to several counties to provide supports and services for transitioning foster care youth; 2) develop effective strategies and tools for counties to conduct ongoing evaluation of the impacts that services and programs developed for transitional youth are having on the desired client-level outcomes (high school graduation, employment, secure housing, etc) and 3) document the county systems changes that take place over the course of the Initiative's implementation.

The CC25I is supported by the Annie. E. Casey Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Charles M. Schwab Foundation, the Stuart Foundation and the Walter S. Johnson Foundation. Counties currently participating include Alameda, Fresno, San Francisco, Santa Clara and Stanislaus. More information may be found at: http://ccyp.berkeley.edu/activities/research/california_connected.html

PIP Outcome: Well-Being

Promote the Well-Being of Children and Families

California is committed to the well-being of children and families. To measure progress towards well-being, the following specific outcomes have been established:

- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) used a statewide statistically valid survey that established a baseline performance level for the well-being measures. Two subsequent surveys are being used to measure change from the baseline performance.

Objective 1: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to reach the PIP target to increase by three percentage points, the percentage of children, parents and caregivers whose needs were assessed and who received services to meet those needs. (PIP Well-Being Outcome 1, Item 17.)

For this objective, there are two measures that need to be met before the objective is considered achieved: 1) the percentage of children, parents and caregivers whose needs were assessed; and 2) the percentage of children, parents and caregivers who received services to meet those needs. California met the first of the two measures and has improved in the second.

California has not yet achieved the goal for this measure because both measures need to be met. However, the survey process has not yet been completed. Pursuant to federal instructions, the State will have up to 12 non-overlapping months to show that actions implemented during the PIP are impacting the data. The new date to determine goal achievement is September 2006.

The initial, second and third surveys have been completed. The State will conduct one additional statistically valid survey to attempt to demonstrate sufficient progress to pass this final outcome prior to the due date of our final report of April 2, 2007. The final survey is in progress.

Objective 2: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to reach the PIP target to increase by three percentage points, the percent of children, parents and caregivers involved in case planning. (PIP Well-Being Outcome 1, Item 18.)

California has improved in all three measures for this item and is performing above the 90% compliance rate in two of the three measures. For this objective, all three measures need to be met before it is considered achieved. The mid-PIP survey indicated improved performance in the improvement goals for the two measures for Item 18, the percentage of children, parents and caregivers involved in case planning.

In the second measure, there has also been improvement. This two-part measure is the percentage the case plan is discussed with: (a) interviewee and (b) interviewee and case child.

California has not yet achieved the goal for this measure because all three measures need to be met. However, the survey process has not yet been completed. Pursuant to federal instructions, the State will have up to 12 non-overlapping months to show that actions implemented during the PIP are impacting the data. The new date to determine goal achievement is September 2006.

The initial, second and third surveys have been completed. The State will conduct one additional statistically valid survey to attempt to demonstrate sufficient progress to pass this final outcome prior to the due date of our final report of April 2, 2007. The final survey is in progress.

Objective 3: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to reach the PIP target to increase by three percentage points the percentage of compliance by workers with planned parent visit schedules; the percentage of parents whose ability to meet their case plan goals was promoted/assisted by social worker visits; and the percentage of parents whose ability to safely parent the in-home child was promoted/assisted by social worker visits. (PIP Well-Being Outcome 1, Item 20.)

The second statewide survey indicated the State obtained our improvement goal for measures two and three for Item 20, (measures worker visits with parents). The survey also indicated improved performance in the first measure (worker compliance with planned parent visit schedules) for this item, although we have not yet quite met the improvement goal.

In the second measure for this item, the goal has been met by the percentage of parents in whose ability to safely parent children in the home was promoted/assisted by social worker visits.

In the third measure for this item, the goal has been met in the percentage of parents in whose ability to meet their case plan goals was promoted/assisted by social worker visits.

California has not yet achieved the goal for this measure because all three measures need to be met. However, the survey process has not yet been completed. Pursuant to federal instructions, the State will have up to 12 non-overlapping months to show that actions implemented during the PIP are impacting the data. The new date to determine goal achievement is September 2006. The initial and second surveys have been completed, and the final survey is in progress.

Objective 4: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to reach the PIP target to increase by three percentage points, the percent of all children in the home, or in

out-of-home placement, who were assessed and received services for educational needs. (PIP Well-Being Outcome 2, Item 21.)

The second statewide survey indicated improved performance in one of the two measures for Item 21 (percentage of children receiving in-home services or who are in out-of-home care who were assessed and received services for educational needs). The first measure is the percentage of cases in which the educational needs of the children were assessed. In the second measure, which is the percentage of children with educational needs who received services, the second survey for this measure indicated a decrease of 1.9 percentage points from the baseline. The CDSS is working with the California Department of Education to improve the provision of services to children.

California has not yet achieved the goal for this measure because both measures need to be met. However, the survey process has not yet been completed. Pursuant to federal instructions, the State will have up to 12 non-overlapping months to show that actions implemented during the PIP are impacting the data. The new date to determine goal achievement is September 2006. The initial, second and third surveys have been completed. The State will conduct one additional statistically valid survey to attempt to demonstrate sufficient progress to pass these outcomes prior to the due date of our final report of April 2, 2007.

Objective 5: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to reach the PIP target to increase by three percentage points, the percent of all children in the home, or in out-of-home placement, who were assessed and received services for mental health needs. (PIP Well-Being Outcome 3, Item 23.)

The second statewide survey indicated improved performance in one of the two improvement goals for Item 23 which is the percentage of children receiving in-home services or who are in out-of-home care that were assessed and received services for mental health needs. The first measure is the percentage of cases in which mental health needs were assessed. The second measure which is the percentage of children with mental health needs who received services also indicated improvement.

California has not yet achieved the goal for this measure because both measures need to be met. However, the survey process has not yet been completed. Pursuant to federal instructions, the State will have up to 12 non-overlapping months to show that actions implemented during the PIP are impacting the data. The new date to determine goal achievement is September 2006. The initial, second and third surveys have been completed. The State will conduct one additional statistically valid survey to attempt to demonstrate sufficient progress to pass these outcomes prior to the due date of our final report of April 2, 2007.

Benchmarks

By June 30, 2005, CDSS will have developed and implemented quality case planning and service delivery protocols in each of the 11 pilot counties for targeted cases in each county.

By June 30, 2005, CDSS, in partnership with the 11 pilot counties, will have developed and implemented protocols to enhance family participation in case planning.

By June 30, 2005, CDSS, in partnership with the 11 pilot counties, will have developed and implemented protocols to include children and youth in case and transition planning.

These benchmarks have all been met. Please see the section on Permanency for more information.

By June 30, 2006, the 11 counties will develop strategies for community resource development to better serve children and families in targeted cases.

This benchmark has been met. As reported previously, as part of the implementation of Differential Response, resources in the community were developed in order to serve the families being referred by CWS. The Child and Family Policy Institute of California survey provided information about how the 11 pilot counties and their community partners have been able to address the problems of families in need who would otherwise have not received services, and thus were successful in addressing issues such as employment and substance abuse.

By June 30, 2006, CDSS will, based on the experience of the total participating counties, begin phasing in an additional 15 counties to implement the quality case planning and service delivery protocols; the protocols to enhance family participation in case planning; the protocols to include children and youth in case and transition planning; and develop strategies for community resource development to better serve children and families.

This benchmark has been met. As previously discussed in the Permanency section, CDSS requested funding from the Legislature to be able to expand the quality case planning and service delivery protocols to additional counties in SFY 2006-07.

Other Efforts

- To improve tracking of implementation of family engagement efforts, the CWS/CMS system is being modified to better capture this information. Among the information that will be included via a drop-down menu is the holding of TDM

meetings, Family Group Decision Making meetings, the completion of strengths and needs assessments, the participation in mediation services, drug court, multi-agency service planning with the family and Wraparound services. This change is contained in the 6.1 CWS/CMS release, and will be implemented in the fall of 2006.

- The Foster Youth Services Program (FYS Program) was created by the California Legislature in 1981, and is administered by the California Department of Education (CDE). The CDE has expanded the countywide FYS Program to include 55 county offices of education, serving approximately 11,200 students in FY 2005-06. This figure represents 99% of the foster youth residing in group homes. The FYS Program is designed to: (1) help obtain health and school records to determine appropriate school placements and coordinate instruction; (2) provide direct service and referrals for counseling, tutoring, mentoring, vocational training, emancipation services and training for independent living; and (3) facilitate education advocacy, training and collaboration among partner agencies and systems.

The FYS Program has demonstrated substantial progress in building collaborative relationships between various local agencies and systems that interface with the lives of foster youth. Interagency agreements and memoranda of understanding have been used with increasing frequency to formalize and document agreements between partner agencies. The collaborative relationships developed by the FYS Countywide Program has resulted in comprehensive services being provided to foster youth residing in group homes. The goal of the FYS Program is to ultimately expand to serve children and youth in all of the counties, as well as all children and youth placed in out-of-home care.

- Building California Construction Careers (BC3) is a program of the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California. The purpose of the statewide program is to educate high school students, teachers and guidance counselors about opportunities for high-paying jobs in the construction industry. The program is funded by a grant from the California Department of Education with Workforce Investment Act funds. BC3's outreach coordinators make presentations at high school classes, assemblies and career fairs. The outreach coordinators have all worked in the building trades and are African American or Latino. The presentations explain why it is important to graduate from high school and complete courses that lead to a career in the construction trades. Topics include job opportunities in construction, the skills necessary for success and how apprenticeship programs work.

In 2004, BC3 received a grant aimed at helping to educate foster youth about career opportunities in the construction industry and link them to job training, pre-apprenticeship and state-approved apprenticeship programs. BC3 also provided training and materials for staff who manage services for foster care youth.

Over the course of the grant, which ended in 2005, BC3 worked to assure that the excellent careers in the building and construction trades are not overlooked by foster youth. They also worked to see that the foster youth were successfully assisted by the program. For many of these young men and women the chance to become an apprentice, to learn a skilled craft, to become self-sufficient, and to form lifelong connections as part of a family of tradespeople, is life-changing. BC3 has received a new grant from the Employment Development Department, and is continuing its outreach efforts.

- In addition to statewide efforts, many counties have devoted considerable resources to the area of educational needs of their children. One example of this is the Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council (ECC). The ECC was created by the Los Angeles Board of Supervisors in November 2004, and was charged with raising the educational achievement of foster and probation youth throughout the county. Recognizing the significant educational achievement gap for youth in the care of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Los Angeles County Probation Department, two Education Summits were convened in 2003 and 2004 by the county departments, schools, and advocacy organizations. More than 200 educators, child welfare and probation experts, advocates, community leaders, youth and caregivers developed a set of recommendations for closing this gap. The establishment of a coordinating body that would provide oversight and accountability for raising the educational attainment of these youth was recommended.

The ECC brings together the major stakeholders responsible for the educational performance of foster and probation youth. Its 23 members include the leadership of school districts with significant numbers of system youth, county departments, the juvenile court, city and county children's commissions, advocacy and planning groups, community agencies, and youth and their caregivers. Its purpose is to coordinate efforts across organizations and jurisdictions, encouraging networks of people to collaborate to expand best practices and fill the gaps in communities where little help or support for families is available so that none of the Los Angeles County's children are left behind.

During its initial year, the ECC reached out to hundreds of organizations, agencies, constituent groups and communities in Los Angeles working to overcome the existing barriers to effectively working together and building solid relationships with those who share responsibility for or have an interest in the education of system youth. The major achievement of the ECC during 2005 was the development of a comprehensive blueprint for raising the educational achievement of DCFS and probation youth. The ECC is now addressing how to implement the recommendations and actions suggested in the blueprint.

Other accomplishments by the ECC during the year include: 1) facilitated a preliminary data match between Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and DCFS that collected descriptive statistics and initial academic achievement

data on foster youth; 2) secured a blanket order from the Juvenile Court permitting DCFS and Probation to share information on their youth with the seven school districts that are members of the ECC; 3) obtained a fee waiver from Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) for foster parents, parents whose children are under the auspices of DCFS and teen parents in the foster care or juvenile justice systems; 4) established a pilot program within DCFS and Probation to fill available openings in State preschool, Early Head Start, Head Start, and LAUP programs with foster children and the children of foster and probation youth; 5) developed a sample Educational Case Plan for DCFS and probation youth and outlined the responsibilities of the departments, caregivers, and the court for implementing these plans and 6) brokered a process for ensuring improved access of foster and probation youth to the LAUSD's Beyond the Bell after-school programs.

- Project HOPE is a youth employment program established by the Alameda County Workforce Investment Board and the Alameda County Department of Children and Family Services to empower current and former foster youth to become self-sufficient through career exploration, educational planning, and leadership development.

Through partnership building and interagency collaboration with existing employment and community resources, Project HOPE works to connect foster youth and former foster youth to an array of employment and educational preparation services in Alameda County. Youth participants will have access to these services: career and educational planning; interview, resume writing, and other job search skill workshops; labor market information research; job fairs and recruiting events by employers; summer employment opportunities; paid or unpaid internships; leadership development and civic engagement opportunities; and skills and educational attainment programs.

- County applications for Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funding have been received and are being reviewed. As they are approved, they are being posted on the MHSA web site. The California Department of Mental Health (DMH) has recently approved approximately \$70 million in MHSA funding for Los Angeles County for local community mental health services. MHSA funded programs throughout Los Angeles County will include drop-in counseling for teens leaving foster care; treatment for alcohol or drug problems; counseling for families with children who have severe emotional disorders; round-the-clock counseling and support; rental subsidies and help finding permanent, affordable housing; and support to help people rebuild their lives after spending time on the streets. Los Angeles involved local stakeholders, including consumers of mental health services and their families, law enforcement, social service agencies and faith-based organizations in the program design and planning process.

The Child Protection and Family Support Branch has the primary responsibility for the Wraparound programs, as well as for meeting the CDSS obligations under

the MHSA. Four new positions were established in CDSS specifically to support these functions.

General workload related directly to the MHSA includes reading and evaluating the three-year Community Services and Support (CSS) county plans, which are required to be submitted to the DMH. CDSS' participation in the review process began in January 2006. Several initial meetings were held with DMH to discuss CDSS' role in implementation of the MHSA with respect to Wraparound Services. CDSS has directly reviewed 15 MHSA CSS plans and provided consultation on previously reviewed plans. State consultants are now assigned to specific counties to provide technical assistance needs related to the MHSA.

Discussions have begun related to between DMH and CDSS regarding data needs in order to create and produce outcome measures related to mental health services provided to children in foster care. CDSS is also working with counties to re-establish relationships in support of Wraparound programs and initiating efforts to recognize program fidelity issues. As counties receive approval of their three-year CSS Plan and begin to implement the MHSA, CDSS anticipates providing significant support and assistance as Wraparound Programs become available statewide.

In conjunction with the Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice, CDSS has reviewed and selected workshop proposals to be presented as part of the Fourth Wraparound Institute in June 2006, co-sponsored by CDSS and DMH.

- In order to further facilitate connections, last year CDSS budgeted for and began implementation of Assembly Bill (AB) 408 (Chapter 813, Statutes of 2003), which dealt with efforts to identify, evaluate and assess relationships between foster children and other important people in their lives. AB 1412 (Chapter 640, Statutes of 2005) was subsequently passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor on October 7, 2005, to ensure that children and youth are actively involved in their case plan and permanency planning process as age and developmentally appropriate.

AB 1412 created a phased-in expansion of requirements that county social workers ask children 10 years of age or older, beginning with those children placed with a non-relative, about important adult relationships and to make efforts to support those relationships. AB 1412 also required a court determination whether the agency has made reasonable efforts to maintain the child's relationships with individuals other than the child's siblings who are important to the child, consistent with the child's best interests. Further, AB 1412 specified that every foster child has the right to be involved in the development of both his/her case and permanent placement plans. It requires that a child's case plan include a statement of the child's wishes regarding their permanent placement plan and an assessment of those stated wishes. It also allows foster children 12-years of age or older to review, sign and be given a copy of their own case plan.

The State budget for SFY 2006-07 includes \$7.7 million for the implementation of AB 1412, which includes and expands implementation of AB 408. Counties have been funded for the increased workload associated with social workers' efforts to identify, evaluate and assess relationships between foster children and other important people in their lives. Regulations are being promulgated.

- The CalWORKs/Child Welfare Partnership Project, also known as the Linkages Project, was launched in November 2000 to develop a coordinated services approach to better serve families and improve outcomes. Through improved coordination, child welfare services can also serve as an anti-poverty program; and CalWORKs (known formally as the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids) can help to prevent child abuse and neglect. Funded by the Stuart Foundation as a four-year initiative and founded in partnership with CDSS, Phase One of the Partnership Project was designed and directed by the California Center for Research on Women and Families, a program of the Public Health Institute.

Recommendations were developed in six programmatic areas identified as priorities: Organizational Structures, Flexible Financing, Organizational Change and Training, Data Systems, Confidentiality and Coordinated Case Planning. Recommendations related for changes in state law and practice were also developed. Over 50 county and state leaders worked for 6 months in a facilitated process to develop the recommendations, which were summarized in a series of publications, distributed to all 58 counties and presented at a statewide conference for county and state leaders in May 2002. These original documents continue to be available at www.ccrwf.org.

The second stage of Phase One provided modest two-year grants to support 13 counties to implement coordinated welfare/child welfare services. Counties were supported with informational convenings and technical assistance. Each county designated a Linkages Coordinator, organized a Planning and Implementation Committee, developed an annual work plan and strategically went about planning and implementing their Linkages services.

Due to the success of Phase One, the Stuart Foundation committed to funding for another phase of Linkages. Phase Two, which began in April 2005, is directed through the Child and Family Policy Institute of California. In Phase Two, 17 additional counties are receiving modest financial support and technical assistance to plan and implement Linkages. More information may be found at: http://www.cfpic.org/linkages/linkages_001.htm

PIP Outcome: Systemic Factors

Systemic Factors

Progress made through the Program Improvement Plan (PIP) in the federal Systemic Factors is as follows:

Objective 1: California will develop and fully implement its new outcomes based quality assurance system, the California Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR) in January 2004 and complete a review of at least 15 counties by June 2005. (PIP Systemic Factor 3, Item 31.)

This objective has been met. The new outcome-based quality assurance system has been fully implemented, and serves as the starting point in the ongoing process of collecting, analyzing and applying data to hold the State accountable. After only two years, there is measurable statewide improvement in California's child welfare system. For example, one of the State outcome measures, which is the rate of children entering foster care, has shown a decrease of 3.4%. In another State measure, the placement of children with their siblings in foster care has increased by 2.8%.

The State and counties find the new system to be very useful. The next steps are to continue to track the data over time, and to come to a thorough understanding of the interaction between outcomes. In the next phase of this quality assurance system, more in-depth analyses can be performed to produce information that can help guide policy and practice -- this includes the use of the PQCR.

The purpose of the PQCR is to learn, through intensive examination of county child welfare practice, how to improve child welfare services and practices in California -- both in the participating county and in other jurisdictions, as well. The PQCR goes beyond the county self-assessment by incorporating outside expertise, including county peers, to help identify the strengths and weaknesses of county child welfare services delivery systems and social worker and probation officer practices. In SFY 2005-06, 23 counties are scheduled to use the PQCR process. Nine counties are focusing on improving the time to reunification; five counties are focusing on decreasing the number of foster care re-entries; two counties are focusing on improving placement stability and one county is focusing on improving length of time to adoption. Others are looking at safety, well being and systemic factors.

Objective 2: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to reach the PIP target that a core curriculum is developed and delivered by all training entities statewide. (PIP Systemic Factor 4, Item 32.)

This objective has been met. A common core curriculum was developed utilizing information obtained regarding current training practices, training needs and input from stakeholders to address the goals and objectives of the Child and Family Service Plan.

All County Information Notice (ACIN) I-49-05, issued on September 8, 2005, provided information on the development of the statewide common core curriculum training

components. The next revision of the common core will be completed by June 30, 2006.

The evaluation framework has been implemented, and data is being collected for all new line workers and supervisors who complete common core training. Data from the common core evaluations have been collected and analyzed by CalSWEC. Reports are generated as the data is received, and are used to inform curriculum revisions and improve delivery of the training. Preliminary analysis using knowledge testing for the common core curricula has been completed. Data collection and pilot analysis will continue through the summer of 2006.

Finally, the May Revision of the Governor's Budget contains \$5.9 million in State funds for additional training days for SFY 2006-07, which are required as part of the common core curriculum.

Objective 3: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to meet the PIP target that statewide minimum requirements for the ongoing training of existing staff will be established and implemented. (PIP Systemic Factor 4, Item 33.)

This objective has been met. The proposed regulations were initially submitted to the Office of Regulation Development in June 2005. An ACIN (I-85-04) was disseminated alerting counties to these proposed regulations. The regulations have since been revised based on the review by CDSS legal staff. They are continuing on through the regulatory process.

Objective 4: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to meet the PIP target that a standard core curriculum will be developed and used to train caregivers in all counties. (PIP Systemic Factor 4, Item 34.)

This objective has been met.

Objective 5: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to meet the PIP target that where service gaps are identified by counties in the C-CFSR process, 20% of the counties will have addressed at least one identified service gap. (PIP Systemic Factor 5, Item 36.)

This objective has been met.

Objective 6: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to meet the PIP target that of counties where improvement is needed, as identified in the C-CFSR process for 1) service array for youth and Native American and African American children, and 2) case plans are generic and lack an individualized approach, 20% of the counties will have addressed at least one identified service gap. (PIP Systemic Factor 5, Item 37.)

This objective has been met.

Objective 7: By June 30, 2005, the State will ensure that all State/county licensing and approving staff are trained on and apply the same licensing/approval standards to all foster family homes. (PIP Systemic Factor 7, Item 42.)

This objective has been met.

Objective 8: By June 30, 2005, the State's objective is to reach the PIP target that each county will implement a State-approved recruitment plan that reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of children in care. (PIP Systemic Factor 7, Item 44.)

This objective has been met.

Other Efforts:

The Dependency Court Improvement Project (CIP) of the Administrative Office of the Courts Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) is proposing a local Self-Assessment and Court Improvement project in its upcoming long-range strategic plan. CDSS offers technical assistance to the Project as requested, and also a staff member from CDSS is a part of the small working group.

Using a process designed by the CFCC, local courts will be encouraged to assess their dependency policies and operations around the key topics identified by the *2005 Dependency Court Improvement Program Reassessment* as deficiencies or areas in need of further study. The self-assessment tools—modeled on tools developed by CFCC's Domestic Violence Safety Partnership (DVSP) program— will include sections for assessing compliance with state and federal mandates, as well as adherence to best practice standards from the *Resource Guidelines* and elsewhere. CIP staff are also reviewing the self-assessment tools from the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges for possible incorporation in this process.

Topic areas for self-assessment will include Courtroom Processes and Quality of Information Available to the Court, Court Leadership and Collaboration (including court participation in the CFSR), Child and Family Well Being, Permanency, Courthouse Administration and Procedures, Judicial Officer Development and Court Infrastructure. Courts will choose specific areas of improvement, create a local court improvement plan that addresses these areas and set measurable outcomes for improvement. The CFCC's CIP will facilitate the development of these plans, monitor the progress of the plans and report non-confidential outcomes as part of the CIP report. CIP will also coordinate CFCC's dependency-related training and technical assistance resources to assist the courts in carrying out their plans. CDSS' role in the Project is to offer technical assistance as requested, as well as having a staff member from CDSS as a part of the small working group.

Training and Staff Development Plan

TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT

California's state-supervised, county-administered Child Welfare System (CWS) presents unique challenges and opportunities for developing and delivering training to various professional and paraprofessional child welfare staff and providers throughout the State.

The 58 county CWS programs vary in many ways: from rural to highly urbanized; from a workforce of a few public child welfare workers to a staff of thousands; from no formal staff development organization to very sophisticated staff development departments. Meeting the evolving and diversified training needs for these programs requires a continuing innovative and multi-faceted approach.

Welfare and Institutions Code section 16200 et. seq. requires CDSS to provide practice-relevant training for social workers, agencies under contract with county welfare departments, mandated child abuse reporters and all members of the child welfare delivery system. The stated purpose of the program is to develop and implement statewide coordinated training programs designed specifically to meet the needs of county child protective service social workers assigned emergency response, family maintenance, family reunification, placement, and permanency responsibilities. (Wel. & Inst. Code § 16206.)

In order to provide consistent reporting of Title IV-E training funds, there has been a change in the reporting methodology for this report. In the past, encumbered funds were used as the source document to report the training funds. However, in an effort to provide more relevant data, the actual expenditures as reported on the Foster Care IV-E federal report were used as the source document. The breakdown of the funding is as follows:

- 17% state operations;
- 14% training contracts;
- 16% for the MSW/BSW stipend program; and
- 53% to support county staff development programs and county initiated training.

Consistent with the CDSS' federally approved cost allocation plan, training expenses are directly charged to the benefiting program. For costs allocated to Title IV-E, the non-federal discount rate will be applied to account for the non-federal caseload.

In response to our Regional Office's concerns, the Children and Family Services Division (CFSD) has changed all training contracts to reflect the appropriate allocation of Federal IV-E dollars for the application of the 75% enhanced training rate and the 50% administrative rate. Beginning with contracts in process during State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2005-06, the CFSD began making changes to those contracts to reflect the proper funding methodology. For SFY 06-07, the CFSD adjusted the spending plan, rewrote all contracts, discontinued using Federal IV-E dollars for inappropriate projects,

and submitted a premise to the Governor's budget to add more State General Fund dollars to our budget to make up for the loss in Federal IV-E dollars.

From SFY 04/05 to SFY 06/07 there has been a total decrease of \$2,032,603 in the use of Federal funds and an increase of \$2,068,208 in State General Fund to cover the adjustment in the use of Title IV-E funds. In addition, for a number of training projects the State either no longer claims Title IV-E funds or the project has been eliminated entirely.

THE TITLE IV-B PLAN TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT GOAL

GOAL 4: Prepare and support the workforce to help children and families reach positive outcomes.

Objective 1: Develop and implement a core curriculum for all new child welfare workers and supervisors.

Objective 2: Establish minimum training requirements for ongoing training of existing staff.

Objective 3: Develop and implement a standard core curriculum for caregivers.

Specific accomplishments/progress:

Objective 1: This objective has been met as of June 2005.

Objective 2: This objective has been met as of June 2005.

Objective 3: This objective has been met as of June 2005.

TRAINING AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Regional Training Academies (RTAs)

The five academies, listed below, are committed to offering a continuum of training services that will: eliminate the duplication of, and offer consistency in, the delivery of training; assure linkages between the classroom and the field; support staff retention; promote the professionalism of current and potential staff in public social services and child welfare agencies within California; and promote promising practices in the field of child welfare.

Public Child Welfare Training Academy (PCWTA)

<http://pcwta.sdsu.edu/courses.html>

Based at California State University, San Diego, and in partnership with California State University, San Bernardino, the Academy provides a comprehensive, competency-

based in-service training program for the public child welfare staff of five Southern California counties: Imperial, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego.

PCWTA has/is:

- Responded to increased child welfare worker hiring by the 5 southern counties. Delivered 15 Line Worker Cores, 2 Manager Cores and 2 Supervisor Cores in 05/06. These classes represent the training of approximately 2,600 students during this time period.
- Leading a team in revising the Child Maltreatment Identification 1 – Physical, Emotional Abuse & Neglect curriculum for roll-out in 06/07. Co-lead with CalSWEC in the development of the Child Maltreatment Identification 2 – Child Sexual Abuse curriculum as part of the Statewide Standardized curriculum project.
- Developing a Fairness & Equity CalSWEC grant curriculum, “Diversity in Placement.”
- Completed PQCRs in San Diego and Imperial Counties, and currently in the process of a PQCR providing support to Orange County, to be completed by the close of 05/06. This represents the completion of PQCRs for all of our counties.
- Staff coordinators in each county are regularly meeting with managers to address training needs and allowing the Academy to be more responsive to each county.
- Participated in the planning of the 2006 Fairness & Equity Symposium.

A significant challenge, during this past fiscal year, has been responding to the increased demands presented by the implementation of the standardized core curriculum. The cost of printing, the training of trainers and some resistance to implementation has been a costly and complicated statewide issue. The Academy responded by communicating more frequently with trainers via newsletter and correspondence, providing training for trainers on the themes being woven throughout the standardized curricula and by exploring alternative delivery methods to save printing costs. Additionally, the PCWTA staff increased their training hours by providing training in Line Worker Core. It appears with the staffing projections in our southern counties that the PCWTA workload will continue to be heavy. The main focus continues to be Line Worker Core, Supervisor and Management Core, and advanced classes being offered in keeping with our State contract. They will continue to address the issues that have arisen out of the core implementation and revision.

Northern California Training Academy (NCTA)

<http://humanservices.ucdavis.edu/Academy/>

The NCTA located at the University of California, Davis, provides training tailored to the varied needs of 33 counties in Northern California: Alpine, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Del Norte, El Dorado, Glenn, Humboldt, Inyo, Lake, Lassen, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Mono, Napa, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Sierra, Siskiyou, Solano, Sonoma, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yolo and Yuba.

PLEASE NOTE: The participant and county totals are representative of only the first three quarters in FY 2005-2006.

NCTA has/is:

- Core Training for New Child Welfare Social Workers: delivered six (six modules, 18 days) core trainings for new child welfare social workers in Davis, Humboldt, Elk Grove and Redding. Training was delivered to 631 participants from 22 counties.
- Core Training for New Supervisors in Child Welfare Services: delivered core training for new child welfare supervisors. Training was delivered to 41 participants from 6 counties.
- Advanced and Specialized Courses: delivered 47 courses across the region to 1,482 participants.
- The SDM Training. Counties implementing SDM in 05-06 required all county staff to attend training: Placer, Modoc, Inyo, Lassen, Plumas, Lake, and Nevada. Delivered ongoing SDM training to 266 participants from 12 counties.
- On-Line Courses: Child Protection History, Dependency Legal Update, ICWA, Introduction to Child Welfare and Multi-Ethnic Placement Act. Over 135 participants have taken on-line courses from 20 counties and CDSS.

Race Matters: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in the Child Welfare System

Trained 215 participants from 12 counties and CDSS.

Research to Practice: Alcohol and Drugs and the Impact on Families in the Child Welfare System

Four days of training with nearly 1,100 participants attending were held in Redding and Davis with 26 counties and CDSS.

Nurses

Symposium held in Davis on April 18, 2006, for child welfare and probation nurses.

Peer Quality Case Review (PQCR)

Supported Tehama, Glenn, Trinity, Humboldt, Placer, Mono and Modoc in the planning, implementation and training of PQCR.

Central California Public Social Services Training Academy (Central)

<http://www.centralacademy.org/>

Located at California State University, Fresno, Central works collaboratively with 11 counties in the central region: Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Stanislaus, Tulare and Ventura.

CCPSSTA has/is:

- Training on the Statewide Common Core Curriculum for line workers and supervisors involving a total of 186 days of training.
- Assisting with implementation and training of TDM in Fresno County.
- Assisting with implementation and training of SDM in Santa Barbara County.
- Assisting with the implementation and training of CAT in Stanislaus County.
- Assisting with PQCR training and implementation materials for Ventura, Fresno, Madera, Kings and Santa Barbara counties.
- Assisting with the evaluation of the Statewide Core Curriculum and with the evaluation of items used for the evaluation tools.
- Researched and assisting with the development of the ICWA curriculum and the Values and Ethics curriculum.

Bay Area Training Academy (BAA)

<http://www.sfsu.edu/~bayacad/>

The BAA at California State University, San Francisco, serves 12 counties that are very diverse in size, challenges and internal resources. The BAA provides professional development services for the following 12 counties: Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Monterey, Napa, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano and Sonoma.

The BAA has/is:

- Continuing work with emancipated youth including a new federal grant that will develop curriculum, written by emancipated youth, who will also serve as trainers.

- Continuing training child welfare supervisors from 30 California counties, along with Hawaii and Guam.
- Partnered with 8 counties in the region and the State to facilitate and assist with their PQCR week. This has included all meetings, developing tools, facilitating focus groups of parent, youth and staff, as well as onsite training and facilitation during the PQCR week.
- Continued working with CalSWEC and the other four Regional Academies to develop and pilot the new Standardized Core Curriculum.
- Worked closely with California Permanency for Youth Project (PYP) in the development of a one-day curriculum on Permanent Family Connections that was piloted in January and is now in the revision process. It will be delivered three more times in the Bay Area this fiscal year.
- Across the region, delivered 185 days of training for 2,943 trainees.

BAA has expanded the presentation of core to accommodate the increased hiring of new workers in the region. Due to the increased demands for line worker core and assistance with the county PQCR process, resources have been strained. They continue to collaborate with the other RTAs, CalSWEC and State to find creative ways to address these issues. BAA will work with their partners in the development of the next phase of core.

Inter-University Consortium-Los Angeles County (IUC)

<http://iuc.sppsr.ucla.edu/>

The Inter-University Consortium Department of Children and Family Services (IUC/DCFS) Training Project continues as a collaborative endeavor between DCFS and the graduate social work programs at California State University Long Beach, California State University Los Angeles, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), and the University of Southern California (USC). California State University Northridge joined the IUC early in 2006. The overall goal of this collaborative project is to increase the professional skills and knowledge of Los Angeles County public child welfare workers. Through specialized training centers located at each university, the Training Project provides in-service training to newly hired social workers, case-carrying social workers, supervisory social workers and management staff. The IUC also provides generous stipends and specialized training to up to 16 Master of Social Work (MSW) students at each university who intern at DCFS, receive specialized child welfare training as part of their MSW course work, and commit to a year employment at DCFS after graduation. To date, more than 495 individuals have received IUC stipends to support their MSW training. The IUC/DCFS Training Project is coordinated by a centralized staff that serves as the liaison between DCFS and the universities, conducts evaluation of training activities, operates the Training Project's data system and coordinates activities affecting all four universities.

The IUC has developed a range of methods for evaluating the training that is offered to DCFS. At a minimum, all trainings are entered into the Training Data System for accountability and monitoring of deliverables under the contract. The IUC Training Data System (TDS) is the primary data management system used by the Consortium and DCFS and serves as the principal data source for coordinating and monitoring the performance of the IUC/DCFS Training Project. The IUC assesses participant reactions to training in almost all presentations, generally assessing satisfaction, trainees' perceptions of learning in the training and its applicability to the job situation. Assessment of knowledge learned by new workers in the CSW Core Academy has been conducted for many years through pre- and post-Academy training evaluation. Starting in 2005, the IUC initiated evaluation of knowledge and skill in key priority areas, including Legal Foundations, SDM, Substance Abuse, Kinship Caregiver, Court Report Writing and Child Maltreatment Identification. Starting in 2004, the IUC initiated the assessment of knowledge learned by staff in system-wide training, including Strength-Based Family Centered Practice, Concurrent Planning, and Kinship Caregiver Training. Training highlights for the time period 7/1/05 through 6/30/06:

- One-hundred-ninety-three training classes were presented to 6,377 staff through March 31, 2006; between April 1 and June 30, 2006, approximately 75-100 classes were planned. In FY 2004-05, 341 classes were presented to 9,069 staff.
- Twelve new worker eight-week CSW Core Academies have been delivered and four more are planned. In all, some 550 new staff will have been trained.
- Training in major initiatives in support of department program outcomes have or will be delivered. Highlights of these include, but are not limited to:
 - Kinship Caregiver Training: 6 presentations to 203 staff, with more due to be rolled out to most regions;
 - SDM (refresher, 2.0 upgrade, etc): 13 presentations to 350 staff and more planned;
 - TDM Facilitator Training: An initial 3 five-day trainings to 60 staff, with more being planned for each region;
 - Management training on various initiatives and department outcome priorities (DR, TDM, Kinship, Permanency, etc.) have been offered to 1,144 managers in 12 training venues with more being planned;
 - Point of Engagement Training (DCFS Service Delivery Model includes TDM, Referral to Community Response): 31 two and one-half day trainings to 1,182 staff were delivered with more planned until all regions have been trained;
 - Court Report Writing Training: 21 classes were delivered to 627 staff following CSW Core Academy. Concurrent Planning Re-Design Training to support improved timelines to permanency.

This has been a rich, challenging and exciting time for the IUC/DCFS partnership, managing high numbers of new hires with the roll outs of major initiatives to support improved practice. The focus of effort for the coming year includes a renewed focus on

strengthening the supervisory rank and file to insure improved oversight of practice through targeted training, an upgraded approach to evaluating training effectiveness and further implementation of the core Family to Family strategies. They continue to focus on ways and means to strengthen transfer/application of learning for accountable managers and supervisors to support the application of what is learned in training to the field.

ONGOING TRAINING ACTIVITIES

California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC)

<http://calswec.berkeley.edu/>

The CDSS partners with the CalSWEC to facilitate the integration of education and practice to assure effective, culturally competent service delivery to the people of California. CalSWEC, based at the University of California, Berkeley, is the nation's largest state coalition of social work educators and practitioners. It is a consortium of the State's 17 accredited social work graduate schools, the 58 California county departments of social services and mental health, the CDSS, and the California Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. In addition, the Administrative of the Courts JRTA project staff serves as a liaison to CalSWEC. CalSWEC is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the following projects:

The Regional Training Academy Coordination Project

In this project, CalSWEC supports the CDSS in its mission to improve training throughout the state by coordinating training efforts, sponsoring trainings and symposia and developing statewide curricula. Highlights for fiscal year 2005/2006 include:

- Co-chaired (with the CDSS) the Statewide Training and Education Committee.
- Planned and facilitated the Ninth Annual National Human Services Training Evaluation Symposium. In its ninth year, the Symposium is widely known as the premier national event for training evaluation in the Human Services. The National Staff Development and Training Association gave CalSWEC a special recognition award for the Symposium in 2003.
- Planned and facilitated the Fourth Annual Symposium on Fairness and Equity Issues in Child Welfare Training. This was held April 27-28, 2006, and was a forum for the training community to present and discuss the issues of culture, fairness and over-representation in child welfare.
- Planned and co-facilitated (with CWDA and the Children and Family Policy Institute) the second Leadership Symposium on Fairness and Equity held November 17-18, 2005, a forum for leaders and managers in the CWS system to discuss these same issues.
- Planned and co-sponsored (with the Children and Family Policy Institute) two symposia on evidence-based practice in child welfare held July 5, 2005 and February 22, 2006, with the aim of infusing research evidence into child welfare practice via training and education.

- Facilitated the continued implementation, evaluation and improvement of the new standardized common core training for newly hired line workers and supervisors. CalSWEC provides funds and coordinates curriculum development for all of the common core. With the implementation of the Framework for Evaluation of Training developed as part of the PIP, CalSWEC also coordinates the evaluation of the core, including data analysis and reporting.

California Social Work Title IV-E Project

Through the Title IV-E Project, the CalSWEC coordinates and supports Master of Social Work (MSW) programs in the State's 17 accredited schools of social work, as well as Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) programs in three of the member schools. The number of MSW students enrolled during the 2005-2006 academic year totaled 702, with an additional 19 students on temporary leave from the program, and 20 students who are completing their theses.

The participating MSW programs include: 13 California State Universities, (Bakersfield, Chico, East Bay, Fresno, Long Beach, Los Angeles, Sacramento, San Bernardino, Stanislaus, Humboldt, San Diego, San Francisco and San Jose); two University of California schools (Berkeley and Los Angeles) and two private schools (University of Southern California and Loma Linda University). CSU Long Beach also includes Distance Education programs at the Channel Islands and San Marcos campuses. The participating BSW programs are at California State Universities, Chico, Fresno and Long Beach.

The MSW programs, each of which follows a specialized child welfare curriculum, are designed to increase the number of professionally-trained social workers in the public child welfare workforce, as well as increase the ethnic diversity of the workforce. The BSW program offers a child welfare concentration in the senior undergraduate year and prepares graduates to work in entry-level public child welfare positions. Students commit to a number of years of employment equivalent to the number of years for which they received aid. Priority for financial aid is given to current county employees and persons who reflect the populations they serve. The Title IV-E project also conducts substantial outcomes and evaluation activities.

The MSW program at California State University, Stanislaus, and the Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Project under a special contract with the CalSWEC, has spearheaded a full-time effort to recruit students from California's Native American communities to the Title IV-E Master of Social Work program. This is part of the ongoing contract and training efforts with CalSWEC. The goal of the program is to improve the perception of both leaders and youth in the Native American community about the role of the university, and more specifically about social work in their lives and to promote the value of a career in public child welfare.

Highlights for 2005/2006 include:

- Preparation for California State University, Northridge, to join the CalSWEC consortium. The school will become the 18th participating University as they begin the enrollment of Title IV-E students in the fall of 2006.
- Preparation for three additional programs to participate in the Title IV-E BSW Project. California State University, San Bernardino, California State University, San Diego, and California State University, Humboldt, will enroll students in the fall of 2006.
- Continued support and development of the Title IV-E BSW Project, including ongoing development of process and program evaluation components. This year CalSWEC planned and facilitated meetings of the BSW Phase I Planning Group.
- Continued the revised online version of the New Graduate Survey, an annual survey in which recent graduates are asked to examine the relationship between their academic programs and their work in the field of public child welfare.
- Planned and facilitated the Title IV-E Student Day, an annual conference of MSW and BSW students enrolled in the Title IV-E programs throughout the state. This conference, coordinated by a team of MSW students, provides current and former students with the opportunity to network with peers and learn clinical and theoretical approaches utilized in the field of child welfare, but not necessarily taught during the traditional academic calendar. The 2006 conference theme was: "Keeping the Vision for Title IV-E: Promoting Strength and Well-Being for Children and Families."

Highlights of the Survey of Graduates:

- Graduates and alumni of this project are employed in 48 of the 58 counties and at the CDSS.
- Graduates have a broad and diverse ethnic and cultural background, as well as considerable language diversity. Forty percent of all of the participants in the program reported speaking at least one language other than English.
- Two-hundred-fourteen (79%) of the 2005-2006 academic year Title IV-E MSW graduates found employment in 34 of the 58 counties.
- One hundred-eighty-three Title IV-E graduates completed their payback obligation years to public child welfare during the 2005-2006 academic year. These MSWs are from earlier and multiple cohorts.
- The numbers of IV-E graduates who remain in public child welfare after they completed payback has increased over the years from 40% of the 1993 graduates to 80% of 2002 graduates. The data are based on all graduates who completed their work obligation in public child welfare from 1996 through 2005.

Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice (RCFFP)

<http://humanservices.ucdavis.edu/resource/>

The RCFFP supports a variety of initiatives and practice approaches that are consistent with family-centered and strengths based practice, including: Family to Family,

Wraparound services, Family Group Decision Making, Integrated Services and training for the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). Additionally, the RCFFP has provided training to juvenile probation officers and supported the California Connected by 25 Initiative. (California Connected by 25 Initiative was formerly known as the Foster Youth Transition Initiative. It is a Family to Family strategy to improve transition for foster youth; a collaborative effort of the Annie E. Casey Foundation.)

RCFFP has:

- Developed a nine-day training program for juvenile probation placement officers. Thirty-four officers from 22 counties are participating in the pilot of this training and an additional 35 will be trained during this fiscal year. The training covers legal and regulatory requirements related to delinquent minors placed in IV-E eligible placements including required face-to-face visits, safety, strengths and needs assessments, case planning, transitional independent living program plans, concurrent planning, youth and family engagement, termination of parental rights and permanency planning for youth.
- Conducted training in Family Centered Practice topics (including Strengths-based training for social workers) for 3 counties and for 191 participants.
- Wraparound services is a model of providing support and mental health services for high-need children who otherwise would be placed in group care, often away from their communities. In addition to providing training to 3 counties for 133 participants, the Fourth California Wraparound Institute provided training to approximately 700 participants from throughout the state.
- A one-day curriculum to support the application of the ICWA in child welfare services and juvenile probation is being developed. It is expected that approximately 450 social workers and deputy probation officers will be trained in regional trainings throughout the State.
- Family to Family is a model to rebuild foster care through the implementation of four core strategies of self-evaluation, TDM, building community partnerships, and recruitment, development and support of resource families. Four trainings for TDM leaders were conducted with a total of 71 participants. Six convenings to provide training to groups of counties implementing Family to Family were conducted with a total of 356 participants. One statewide California Family to Family Convening was held in January 2006, with an emphasis on Best Practices through Partnerships.
- A convening was held for the California Connected by 25 Initiative for 5 counties and 54 participants.

EASTFIELD MING QUONG FAMILY PARTNERSHIP INSTITUTE (EMQ-FPI)

<http://www.emq.org/about/index.html>

EMQ-FPI continues to provide on site technical assistance to counties and lead agencies, including open forums for all county partnerships. EMQ FPI provides coaching and mentoring at the child and family team level. They continue to assist the CDSS in conducting site reviews for fidelity of the California Wraparound model.

EMQ FPI has:

- Provided tailored, solution-focused training to counties as they develop and adjust Wraparound programs that fit the county's unique situation. The provider assisted counties with the systemic integration of Wraparound and other initiatives.
- Provided on-site technical assistance to counties and lead agencies including open forums for all county partners.
- Provided coaching and mentoring at the child and family team level.
- Provided technical assistance to counties that want to expand their Wraparound programs pursuant to the Mental Health Services Act/Proposition 63 requirements.
- Assessed and/or responded to any needs or requests from existing Wraparound programs that are at various stages of implementation. In addition, the site reviews assessed the fidelity of the Wraparound program.

In 2005, EMQ provided 42 technical assistance/trainings to 1,031 attendees. So far, in 2006, they have provided 9 technical assistance/trainings for 242 attendees with an additional scheduled 14 technical assistance/trainings.

Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC)

The Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) trainings teach counties how to effectively and efficiently study, test, evaluate and implement child welfare service practice changes. Learning sessions are held in which the counties gather together for face-to-face learning, strategizing and networking. These sessions are led by national experts. The counties have been focusing on the following subjects: the intake structure as three pathways of service response; and a standardized approach to assessment of safety, risk, protective capacity and needs.

The time period in between the learning sessions is called the Action Period. During this time, Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycles are conducted to test and evaluate a series of small-scale changes with the goal of more rapidly bringing about a larger scale change in a particular area. The counties participate in a series of collaborative conference calls to report their progress, receive technical assistance regarding their work and get feedback and insights from other counties. The calls are oriented around specific topic areas, such as Assessment, Partnering, Engagement and other topics pertinent to the implementation of Differential Response.

Throughout the year, BSC:

- Continued assistance with the 11 pilot counties of the DR framework in targeted communities.
- Continued to provide training and technical assistance to these counties (and 31 other counties) through December 2006 regarding the implementation of this new system.
- Based on county input, continued adjustments to training and technical activity.
- Increased number of full-day regional training sessions targeted to the specific training needs for implementation of DR.
- Counties provide BSC with structured monthly reports on their progress and collect data to monitor and evaluate outcomes. To maintain consistency in the approach to practice change, the training cross-referenced BSC with the Self Assessment and System Improvement Plan as delineated in the C-CFSR. There were a total of 43 counties represented within the three groups who received the training.

During SFY 2005-2006 (last quarter only), and SFY 2006-2007, the Child and Family Policy Institute of California (CFPI) will continue two core BSC activities to spread the learning and practice change that has occurred in the pilot counties to additional counties in California. The two core activities are:

- Peer Technical Assistance Teams will have an opportunity to participate in another phase of Peer Technical Assistance. Four mentor teams, all of whom are DR pilot counties, will be matched with five trainee teams to further advance their implementation of DR through the BSC method.
- The CFPI will maintain the project extranet through 2006. The extranet is an interactive website that contains information about DR implementation from both California counties and other states who have implemented DR. The range of information includes cycles of change counties have tried (PDSAs), forms, policies and procedures, national DR research, practice guides, and contact information from every participating county. The extranet also includes a discussion board where counties can pose questions and dialogue with one another about DR implementation.

University of California, Berkeley – Performance Indicators/California Children's Services Archive

<http://cssr.berkeley.edu/cwscmsreports/>

The Performance Indicators Project at the Center for Social Services Research (CSSR) provides timely and useful data to California counties regarding children in the CWS system. Through an interagency agreement with the CDSS, CSSR receives quarterly extracts of data from the State's SACWIS system, CWS/CMS, and reconfigures and analyzes the data to produce information at the State and individual county level. Data is posted on the public website and most tables are updated quarterly. Data that is posted includes, but is not limited to, the national standards used in the CFSR review and its resulting PIP and additional outcome measures required by California's Child Welfare Outcomes and Accountability System (AB 636). In addition to statewide and county specific totals for many measures, data are stratified and presented by age, race/ethnicity and gender. CSSR staff continues to provide training to many State and county staff in a variety of ways.

Training is administered through the provision of data, through e-mail technical assistance on demand, through telephone conference call trainings, telephone technical assistance on demand and through numerous on-site trainings throughout the State in individual counties, at CWDA regional meetings, at CWDA statewide Children's Committee meetings and for CDSS staff.

Training is given to county administrators, managers, and line staff and state administrators and managers. In addition, since the website is public, advocates, legislators and representatives from other agencies serving children and families have access to this information.

Since there are several types of training, durations vary. On-site visits typically include either half-day or full-day sessions. CWDA monthly meetings occur over two half-days each month. County specific conferences generally include half-day sessions. Telephone technical assistance can be anywhere from a few minutes to an hour, telephone conference calls can be anywhere from one-three hours in length. E-mail assistance is ongoing. All types of training are long-term.

Most on-site training is provided by Barbara Needell, MSW, PhD, Principal Investigator on the Performance Indicators Project. In addition, Daniel Webster, MSW, PhD, Project Director, conducts some on-site training. Phone and e-mail conference calls, and responses on demand are handled by Drs. Needell and Webster, along with several PhD student Graduate Student Researchers and the web person, Helen Kim.

Virtually all of the work on the Project is directly, or indirectly, a training activity. In addition to the time required to reconfigure, run, test, and post the data quarterly, staff spend much time creating training tools (e.g., PowerPoint presentations, Excel spreadsheets with graphs, etc.), and working with State and county staff to understand the data and use the tools. Then, this acquired knowledge and skill is used to present data to other child welfare staff and community partners. This work has been extremely useful to county staff that have responsibility for data entry, and has resulted in improved data quality.

CWS System Improvements Implementation

In conjunction with the CDSS, 11 pilot counties have implemented CWS System Improvements that will create an outcome-oriented approach to reducing the incidence of families and children entering the CWS system. The CDSS provided funding to counties for training CWS staff and selected county partners to ensure that the CWS System Improvements are successfully implemented. The three primary areas are:

- Safety Assessment
- Differential Response
- Permanency and Youth Transition

Training for the Safety Assessment Approach continued this fiscal year, after the implementation of the Approach by the 11 pilot counties on June 30, 2005. There are two sets of tools that meet the requirements of the Safety Assessment Approach. One set is the CAT and the other is SDM. Training and technical assistance by SPHERE continued for the four pilot counties that implemented CAT. Training for trainers was held in fall 2005 on the modifications made to SDM and the resulting curriculum changes. The modifications were made to ensure that SDM met the requirements of the Safety Assessment Approach. The new version of SDM was rolled out to all SDM counties in March 2006, after being tested with the seven pilot counties that utilize SDM. Additional counties will be trained in either CAT or SDM as they select which set of tools they wish to implement.

Training for counties for Differential Response is discussed under the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) Program section.

The *Fiscal Essentials for Children's Services* are trainings designed to improve services to vulnerable children and families via improved funding and fiscal claiming strategies. The statewide trainings for this year began in March 2005, and will continue into 2006. The *Fiscal Essentials for Children's Services Forum* provides an opportunity for county and state child welfare and related agencies to join together to learn and share information on new ways to fund children's services. Additionally, a website was developed that contains questions and answers generated by the *Fiscal Essentials* training sessions and forums. The website address is www.humanservices.uc.davis.edu/fiscalacademy. The total cost for the project is \$156,000, with \$96,000 being claimed under Title IV-E Training and State General Funds of \$160,000.

An essential component of the permanency protocols is family engagement. In 2005, nine additional California Family to Family counties were trained on and rolled out TDM: Glenn, Humboldt, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, Tehama, Trinity and

Ventura. Training is provided through the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Stuart Foundations, or through the Regional Training Academies. As of December 31, 2005, 22 of the 24 Family to Family counties are using the TDM core strategy. San Diego County began their TDM rollout in January 2006. Kern and Solano counties are scheduled to roll-out TDM in fall 2006.

Special Start Training Program

www.mills.edu/specialstart/program.html

The Special Start Training Program (SSTP) at Mills College was funded by Office of Child Abuse Prevention Bureau (OCAP) to provide a statewide training program for social workers, community professionals, foster parents, adoptive parents and relative care providers on the developmental and behavioral needs specific to high-risk newborns, who are graduates of the newborn intensive care nursery.

In federal FY 2005, 400 professionals and 60 foster parents completed the core training program, the Family Infant Relationship Support Training (FIRST).

A website was developed to present information that describes the training program, training resources in both English and Spanish and permits on-line training registration. In 2006, the website will be expanded to include videotaped vignettes that demonstrate patterns of high-risk infant behavior that include autonomic and motor.

CWS/CMS Training

<http://www.hwcws.cahwnet.gov/training.asp>

The CWS/CMS is currently operational in all 58 counties and serves approximately 19,000 State and county CWS workers. A standardized statewide curriculum is available to all State and county staff working in the CWS program.

A separate CWS/CMS training allocation (CWS/CMS staff development) is provided to counties to train staff on how to use the CWS/CMS. Counties use these funds to provide local system training to new staff, staff whose functions within the program are changing, or special training to meet county or individual staff member specific needs. Classes include both locally delivered training similar to that provided under the statewide contract curriculum, as well as locally determined training priorities, which may not be readily available at a statewide level.

Since October 2005, an approved California Multiple Award Schedules vendor, CGI-AMS, selected by the CDSS and Project staff, has provided statewide CWS/CMS classroom training. Statewide classroom training includes the following: New User Training, Business Objects Training/County Access to Data Training and County On-Site Refresher/Advanced Training.

The CWS/CMS training region “simulates” the actual CWS/CMS for training purposes. This ensures counties can train their users on replicated CWS/CMS cases without negatively impacting the production environment. This tool is used to train new users,

to refresh the skills of staff, to train staff on recent application changes and to test changes to new releases of the system.

Many counties participated in CWS/CMS Statewide Training offered to staff from July 2005-February 2006. The quarterly report covering July 1 to September 30, 2005, training statistics show that 46 days of New User Training and 30 days of Onsite training were provided. The most recent data starting in November 2005 to February 2006 shows that 74 days of New Users Training, 21 days of Onsite training and 4 days of Business Objects Training have been provided.

The CWS/CMS Training Unit develops, updates and maintains all of the State's CWS/CMS training tools and materials, including Computer Based Training, On-Line Release Notes, Quick Reference Guides and the standard training curriculum that is maintained on the CWS/CMS website. Updating and maintenance is performed on an ongoing basis to ensure that training tools and materials provide statewide uniformity on how CWS/CMS should be used to record information and data.

The Training Unit provides oversight of CDSS vendor contracts for statewide classroom training, manages the IBM Training Region contract and provides training for trainers (including county, State and contract trainers).

In June 2004, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) conducted an Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) Assessment Review to validate and verify whether CWS/CMS gathers, extracts and reports AFCARS data accurately. The ACF required the CDSS to develop and implement an AFCARS improvement plan and set timeframes to modify CWS/CMS programming and AFCARS mapping over the next two years. However, many of the planned AFCARS changes had to be postponed because the same staff resources were needed for competing priorities such as planning and procurement activities to transfer (re-host) the CWS/CMS application from a Colorado facility to California by April 2006; program changes to improve PIP outcome measures; assistance to counties to update SIPs; PIP system changes for Release 5.5 implemented in November 2005; interim releases 5.5.1, 5.5.2, and 5.5.3 delivered in January, February and May 2006, respectively; and the re-procurement of the system maintenance contract expected by mid-2006. CDSS also plans to take over direct responsibility for the transmittal of the AFCARS reports by spring 2007. AFCARS system application corrections are planned for the major releases following Release 6.1. The CDSS is also addressing the data entry issues identified in the AFCARS Assessment Review improvement plan as part of CWS/CMS (SACWIS) training as well as in an ACIN.

Perinatal Substance Abuse/HIV Infant Program (formerly Options for Recovery Perinatal Program)

The CDSS has the authority and funding to plan and implement services for court dependent children, aged 0-60 months, residing in out-of-home care that are substance-exposed or test positive for Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV). All counties submit a

county plan for approval to CDSS, specifically outlining a proposed budget, budget justification and detailed job specification for each requested staff position within the Perinatal Substance Abuse/HIV Infant Program.

County allocations and expenditures are controlled by CDSS. The responsibility for the development, implementation and monitoring of program policies and procedures to ensure compliance with state law also falls within the purview of the CDSS. The CDSS provides training and technical assistance to all participating Perinatal Substance Abuse/HIV Infant Program county staff. Emphasis is placed on assuring that all staff responsible for implementing the Perinatal Substance Abuse/HIV Infant Program at the local level has an understanding of the needs of the target population and the local resources to serve them.

The following counties are currently participating in this Program: Alameda, Butte, Glenn, Contra Costa, Monterey, San Francisco, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz and Shasta. The philosophy of this program recognizes that drug and alcohol abuse is a disease that requires treatment and compassion. The service delivery consists of interagency collaboration, targeted recruitment, specialized training, respite care and support services for foster parents and federally-eligible relative caregivers.

The training has included:

- Several infant classes for foster parents and relative caregivers.
- Yearly cross-training – Interagency collaborations.
- Classes in various community college venues.

Some of the significant accomplishments include:

- Opened a Fetal Alcohol Diagnostic Center in March 2006 that will provide additional services to the children in the program.
- New computerized tracking system.
- San Luis Obispo was the first county in California to cross-train foster parents in the Social Worker Academy. The first academy was such a success that an advanced version was introduced.
- Two Early Intervention Officials (EIOs) workers are serving birth parents in Shasta County with great success. Every spring they have foster parent retention training and professional cross trainings.

Some changes to the program include:

- Some counties are doing family placement meetings on all PSA/HIV Infant Program detentions to determine the best placement after detention.
- There have been increased advertisements for recruitment in local newspapers, Parent Magazine and the local News and Review.

Some barriers that were encountered, and the steps taken to overcome those barriers, are:

- Counties report having problems getting children into Behavioral Health Services and Regional Center Services. The PSA/HIV Infant Program nurse is contacting the social workers directly to expedite the process.
- Relative caregivers are wary of involvement with Children's Services Programs. Outreach and personal contact being used to overcome the reluctance with good results.

Future plans include:

- Enhance Facilitating All Resources Effective (FARE) program to provide better services to the families transitioning from family reunification to family maintenance.
- To engage PSA/HIV Infant Program parents in their own regional meetings with other PSA/HIV Infant program parents from different counties.
- To add a PSA/HIV AOD counselor to assess, refer and support birth parents with recovery.

Specialized Training for Adoptive Parents (STAP) Program

The STAP Program provides specialized recruitment, training and services to pre-adoptive/adoptive parents of children born HIV positive and/or substance exposed. The program is designed to assist the adoption of medically fragile children who are dependent children of the court, have an adoption case plan and reside with pre-adoptive or adoptive parents.

Participating counties are required to provide a training curriculum which includes all of the following:

- Orientation.
- Effect of alcohol and controlled substances on the fetus and children.
- Normal and abnormal infant and early childhood development.
- Special medical needs and disabilities.
- Recovery from addiction to alcohol and controlled substances.
- Self-care for the caregiver.
- HIV/AIDS in children.
- Issues in parenting, providing lifelong permanency and substance abuse prevention to children with prenatal alcohol and other controlled substances exposure.
- Issues specific to caring for a child who tests HIV positive.

There were no programmatic changes to the STAP Program in SFY 2005/06. However, there are eight counties participating (two more counties than reported in SFY 2004/05

and two less than in years prior to SFY 2004/05. The decrease in county participation appears to be caused by county budgetary and staffing problems).

The CDSS will continue to provide technical assistance to those counties participating in the program and to any counties that submit a plan to participate in the program.

Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment Training (CATTA)

<http://www.cattacenter.org/>

The CDSS is required to use private, non-profit agencies to provide the training and technical assistance in specific areas. The agencies are responsible for implementing three primary program objectives: 1) training and technical assistance; 2) development of regional resource consortiums and 3) information development and distribution.

For the training from July 1, 2005 through December 31, 2005, there were a total of 12 sessions and 2,100 participants trained.

Training included the following: Fathers: Their Powerful Influence on the Lives of their Children – 177 participants; 19th Annual Children's Network Conference: Young Children, Adolescents, and Adults - The At-Risk Chain Reaction - 384 participants; Madera County CAPC 6th Annual Day for Children Conference - 129 participants; Child Forensic Interview Specialist Training on the Investigation of Maltreatment - 23 participants; 10th Annual Nexxus Conference - 700 participants; 18th Annual Children's Network Conference: Connecting the Pieces: Family Violence, Substance Abuse, and Children-At-Risk - 477 participants; MDIC Summit 2005: Current Trends and Legal Perspectives - 120 participants; Regional Resource Consortium Coordinator Meeting - 8 participants; 7th Annual Building Bridges to Peaceful Families -126 participants; Fall Children's Conference – 137 participants; Children's Forensic Interview Special Training on the Investigation of Maltreatment – 26 participants; Working with Sexually Aggressive Children - 182 participants; Child Forensic Interview Specialist Training on the Investigation of Child Maltreatment - 63 participants and Victim to Perpetrator Breaking the Cycle in Abused Children – 91 participants.

The training information from January 1, 2006, will not be available from the grantees until September 30, 2006. (The grantees need a minimum of 45 days from end of State FY to compile and prepare this comprehensive data.)

The CATTA grant also has:

- Expanded the Statewide network to over 14,000 contacts stored in one database.
- Initiated website redesign to be more user-friendly and responsive to county information.
- Maintained over 1,600 cataloged resources via the CATTA website.

- Is updating the Promising Practice Guide, a desktop reference illustrating child abuse prevention councils (CAPC) best practices and distributing statewide as needed.
- Capacity building for the special needs community.

The CDSS has extended the training contract with Sonoma State, California Institute on Human Services, with a two-year extension and augmentation. The contract will sunset June 30, 2007. The new scope of work activities includes peer reviews, individual county training in collaboration with the regional resource consortiums and intensified cultural competence strategies including special needs communities.

Parent Leadership Training

<http://www.parentsanonymous.org/pahtml/paAbout.html>

Since 1999, Parents Anonymous® Inc., has been partnering with CDSS to provide parent leadership training and technical assistance to child abuse prevention agencies across the State to encourage and support shared leadership. Parents Anonymous® Inc.'s, grant objectives include: the provisions of intensive training and technical assistance to three counties per fiscal year; the provision of four additional general trainings and the expansion of the California Parent Leadership Team. Additionally, a newsletter is distributed statewide biannually. The Parent Leadership grant with Parents Anonymous® Inc. provides training and technical assistance to administrators and service providers at the county level to increase their awareness of the benefits of working in partnership with parent leaders. The goal of the grant is to foster a collaborative relationship in local communities where parents and professionals can work together to ensure quality services for children and families. This grant is funded through June 30, 2006.

One-hundred-nineteen parents have received Parent Leadership Training. Through this training, the outcome has been that parents are able to take on leadership roles such as co-trainer; contributing to written materials; participating at conferences and working meetings; grant reviewing; participating in quality improvement and evaluation activities; participating in needs/strengths assessment processes; public speaking; becoming peer review team member; becoming advisory board member, participating in focus groups and other important roles. Parents have received recognition by boards of supervisors, numerous agencies and Parents Anonymous® Inc. The parents are able to raise public awareness about the important role parents play in shaping the child abuse prevention agenda.

Activities this reporting period include:

- Governor's Proclamation that National Parent Leadership Month was in February 2006.
- Provided intensive training to five Office of Child Abuse Prevention targeted counties including Tulare, Kern, Sacramento, Tuolumne and Mariposa.

- Recruited six additional members to the California Parent Leadership Team; there are 18 members on the team.
- Provided on-going training and technical assistance to the Central Regional Resource Consortium, the Inland Empire/San Diego Regional Resource Consortium, and North Coast Regional Consortium.

The Parents Anonymous® Inc. grant has enhanced collaboration and communication with the CATTA training contract improving services statewide. Parents Anonymous® Inc. continues to provide evaluation information and has submitted a proposal seeking continued OCAP funding into SFY 2006-07.

Family Support Training Model/Family Resource and Support Training and Technical Assistance Project (“Strategies”)

www.familyresourcecenters.net

The Family Support Training Model/Family Resource and Support Training and Technical Assistance Project (Project) provides training and technical assistance to prevention/early intervention-focused family resource centers (FRC) and family support programs through a network of three regional training centers known as “Strategies.”

Strategies this year has:

- Delivered three FRC Core trainings to a total of 93 participants.
- Presented 3 (1½ day) peer review training sessions to 15 FRCs with a total of 38 participants from 5 counties.
- Conducted 7 statewide teleconferences addressing FRC fundamentals and nonprofit management issues.
- Participated in a series of teleconferences with a total of 73 FRCs statewide.
- Training sessions and workshops attended by a total of 4,772 participants.
- Individual technical assistance provided to 162 agencies in 46 counties.
- Group technical events (strategic planning meetings and staff development in-services) conducted in 24 counties with participation of 103 agencies.
- Conducted 8 capacity building events for 198 participants.
- Presented Facilitative Leadership training to 23 FRCs.
- Presented Case Management 8 times to a total of 313 participants.
- Home Visiting was presented 3 times to 130 participants.
- Maintained a statewide e-mail listserv, “Strategies Announce”, that allows more than 1,100 subscribers to network with each other.
- Redesigned the website to be more user-friendly.
- Approximately 92,677 people visited the website, www.familyresourcecenters.net.
- Distributed the “Working Strategies” quarterly newsletter to 4,500 subscribers.
- Included networking activities in all Strategies trainings and workshops.
- Provided technical assistance and training to local citizen review panels.
- Provided training/technical support for the Supporting Father Involvement Study.
- Strategies reached 810 agencies in 55 counties across California.

The grantees have met or exceeded their objectives. The main challenge for this project includes the successful incorporation of training activities related to DR as they pertain to path one and path two families.

The first three-year grant term for the Strategies project ended June 30, 2005. A new three-year grant cycle began July 1, 2005, and will end on June 30, 2008.

Training for Group Home Staff

The California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 6, Chapter 5 requires group home staff be trained regarding the children served in the group home. Section 84064 requires the group home administrator to develop a training and orientation plan for group home staff. Section 84065 requires the plan have an overview of the client population served by the group home and training on the group home regulations. The training plan also includes training on the needs and services plan that is required for each child in care. Section 84068.2 requires the group home social work staff to develop the needs and services plan based on the needs of the child as outlined in the case plan with the child and the placement social worker. The group home must obtain written approval from the child's placement social worker on the needs and services plan. If the child is 16 or older, the needs and services plan incorporates the child's Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) in the case plan and outlines the group home role in meeting the child's goals in the needs and services plan. Further, Section 84072, Personal Rights, states, "(25) To work and develop job skills at an age-appropriate level that is consistent with state law. (27) To attend Independent Living Program classes and activities if he or she meets age requirements."

New group home administrators must complete 40 hours of training, which may include modules on the needs of transition age youth. Community Care Licensing reports that some vendors have offered these modules, but they do not have the information on the numbers of classes offered or the numbers of administrators trained. Similarly, continuing education for group home administrators may include this topic.

The child's social worker must meet the Manual of Policies and Procedures, Section 30-504.1, Service Delivery Methods: "1. Independent living services shall be provided to all eligible youth, based on needs, services and goals identified in the most recently completed Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP)." The placement social worker and the group home staff work together to meet the child needs as outlined when the child is placed in the facility.

Structured Decision Making (SDM)

The purpose of SDM is to assist child welfare workers in assessing risk; to assist counties in targeting services to children who are at greatest risk of maltreatment and to improve outcomes for children and families such as the reduction of the recurrence of child maltreatment. Workers are trained to use the tools, which consist of a safety and

risk assessment, family strengths and needs assessment, and reunification tools. The tools are used throughout the life of a case, from the intake at the hotline until the child is reunified with his or her family. The only time the use of the SDM tools ceases is when it is determined that the child may not be reunified with his or her parents, and the case goal is changed from reunification to permanent placement.

Training on the SDM tools is a two step process. In California, child welfare workers are trained to use SDM by either attending a class at the Regional Training Academies, or by being trained by county trainers. Workers gain an understanding of the philosophy and research behind SDM through the training. They learn to use SDM by examining and practicing each tool in the SDM model. The second step is to learn to use the web-based tools. Staff from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency's Children's Research Center conduct the training for trainers in each county. Supervisors and managers are trained separately, prior to line staff being trained. They are trained using an additional module, which includes conducting supervisory case reviews, producing and utilizing management reports, and motivating staff to fully utilize SDM.

During SFY 2005-06, 70.5 days of training and technical assistance was provided to staff from 31 counties by staff from the Children's Research Center. In addition, during the year, trainers at the Regional Training Academies and CDSS staff also received four-day training for trainers through the Children's Research Center on the recent modifications to SDM.

Counties implementing SDM during SFY 2005-06 that required all county staff to attend training were Placer, Modoc, Inyo, Lassen, Plumas, Lake and Nevada Counties. The Northern Regional Training Academy delivered ongoing SDM training to 266 participants from 12 counties and 1 county community partner.

National Council on Crime and Delinquency/Children's Research Center's (NCCD/CRC) SafeMeasures Reporting Service

The contractor, NCCD/CRC, has designed tools and training, SafeMeasures, that support the CWS Outcomes and Accountability Review System. The training and tools are used to aid the counties and the CDSS in better understanding data collection, analysis and reporting techniques aimed at ensuring compliance with Division 31 regulations, Titles IV-B and IV-E requirements, and improving State and federal outcome indicators. SafeMeasures provides counties with the tools and knowledge to conduct a more thorough assessment of their child welfare system, identify data trends, and assist in the allocation of resources. CRC analysts provide both online and onsite hands-on technical assistance with the SafeMeasures application for counties on request.

Training is conducted by Children's Research Center staff in county offices statewide for social workers, supervisors and managers, and consists of a full day of training. During State fiscal year 2005-2006, CRC has developed additional measures and has revised

the Permanence Outcome Measures in SafeMeasures. A training curriculum has been developed and is currently being considered for implementation.

Child Death Review Team Training

The CDSS has contracted with the Interagency Council on Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) for county child death review team training. ICAN provided training to over 100 local child death review team members in five regions. The training provided information to team members on properly identifying child abuse and neglect related deaths and review team processes. (See additional information under Resulting Programmatic Efforts to Identify and Prevent Child Fatalities.)

Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) Training

The CDSS made tentative plans to provide ICPC training to California placing agencies and ICPC liaisons through Regional Training Sessions. Those plans have been modified because of the national efforts to re-write the Compact. In the interim, the CDSS schedules quarterly regional meetings with California ICPC liaisons. These meetings provide the opportunity for CDSS to consult with County staff and clarify ICPC requirements. The CDSS met with Northern Counties Placement Committee in October, January and April. In April, there were 24 participants representing 19 counties. The Southern Counties Placement Committee will be meeting again in June. The CDSS also provides technical assistance to county staff for the out-of-state group home placement of children. Additionally, staff from the Out-of-State Placement Policy Unit (OSPPU) are continually available by telephone to provide technical assistance to parties involved in the interstate placement of a child. The CDSS has long-term plans to provide training when the New Compact is enacted.

Interstate Compact on Adoption and Medical Assistance (ICAMA) Training for County Liaisons

The proposed training for ICAMA liaisons has been modified. The CDSS has a representative who is a member of the Executive Committee for the Association of Administrators of the ICAMA (AAICAMA). The AAICAMA is planning to release ICAMA training on compact disc (CD) by the end of 2006. However, in the interim, the CDSS OSPPU staff provides training and technical assistance by telephone to county ICAMA administrators.

NOTEWORTHY PROJECTS, CONFERENCES AND SYMPOSIUMS

The Independent Living Practice (ILP) Training Institute

The ILP Training Institute was held April 19-20, 2006, and provided information to a wide variety of stakeholders regarding the federal John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program and State ILP requirements. Additionally, promising practice methods were presented to assist the participants in achieving program compliance and

ensuring positive outcomes for foster youth ages 16-21. There were approximately 300 attendees.

Annual ILP Teen Forum

The CDSS sponsors a Teen Forum for foster youth, ages 16-19, to provide them with a forum to learn about the Independent Living Program, Transitional Housing Placement Program, Medi-Cal and educational opportunities and services. The forum also provides California foster youth with a unique opportunity to network with youth throughout the State. The forum was held June 23-25, 2006, at California State University, Northridge, and approximately 200 youth and sponsors attended the conference.

Annual Training Evaluation Symposium

The symposium is a part of the ongoing contract and training efforts with CalSWEC and does not constitute new training efforts.

Beyond the Bench Conference

Beyond the Bench is an annual, multidisciplinary conference that brings together juvenile dependency and delinquency professionals, including judicial officers, court administrators, child welfare professionals, public defenders, district attorneys, probation officers, educators, mental health professionals and service providers from many of California's 58 counties to learn about the latest research and best practices with regard to improving juvenile justice, child abuse and neglect proceedings. The conference is funded by court improvement funds and conference fees. The most recent conference was held in December 2005 in San Diego.

Annual California Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Conference

This conference provides training regarding the ICWA to tribal ICWA workers; tribal advocates, tribal council members and community leaders; law enforcement; child welfare and probation staff; judges; attorneys; foster/adoption agencies; social services agency personnel; and other interested parties. The mission of the conference is to support positive partnerships between tribes and federal, state and local governments for the benefit of all Indian children. The conference was held in June 2006 with participants from numerous counties, tribes, tribal organizations and others who work with Indian children and families.

Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) Curriculum Training

The Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice (RCFFP), a part of the University of California Davis Extension Center for Human Services, will deliver training to increase coordination, knowledge and skills in implementing ICWA. The training stimulates greater understanding of tribal issues for individuals responsible for making decisions

regarding Indian children and their families. Through the training process, participants develop skills on effectively engaging tribal members in cooperative relationships, as well as assist tribes in understanding and effectively negotiating with public child welfare agencies. The training better informs participants of the requirements of ICWA and provides strategies to improve compliance. Participants also develop a greater understanding and appreciation of tribal challenges and historical barriers to effective relationships with government representatives. In turn, tribal participants develop effective skills in working with public child welfare agencies.

This project is funded at the 75% enhanced federal financial participation rate for Child Welfare Services Title IV-E training. The total cost for the project is \$150,000, with \$84,375 being claimed under Title IV-E training and State General Fund of \$65,625.

The training is presented at tribes or tribal organization locations whenever possible. This long-term training is provided through an annual contract that CDSS has with RCFFP to coordinate the training and revise curriculum, as necessary.

This training activity meets the goal of Permanence, Objective 7, to prepare and support the workforce to help children and families reach positive outcomes, and Objective 10, ensure that continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved for children in foster care.

The current focus on this project has been to modify CDSS' existing ICWA training curriculum to focus on tribal culture and better meet the day-to-day application processes of ICWA for county child welfare workers and juvenile probation placement officers. The curriculum was developed with extensive input from tribal representatives, advocates and county child welfare and probation agency staff. Many of these representatives are being used as co-trainers. The CDSS plans to continue this project into future years.

Indian Child Welfare Act Full Compliance Project

The Judicial Council of California-Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) will support CDSS' commitment to the full implementation of ICWA by providing technical assistance to county child welfare and probation staff, judges, judicial staff and county counsels on the requirements of the Act. The AOC will develop protocols to assure complete understanding of ICWA and will facilitate education by a broad-based group of subject matter experts on a statewide, regional and local basis. The ICWA Full Compliance Project will improve compliance with the ICWA by making available a range of cross discipline facilitation and education services provided by the AOC staff and outside consultants. These services will be tailored to meet the needs of the local county or region.

This project is funded at the 50% federal financial participation rate for Child Welfare Services Title IV-E training. The cost for the training is \$150,000; \$75,000 is claimed under Title IV-E training funding and State General Fund providing the remaining

\$75,000. The technical assistance is provided at the local court or other community sites, depending on the size of the audience. Subject matter workshops are conducted regionally. This long-term training is provided by AOC staff and outside subject matter experts.

County/regional ICWA subject matter workshops will be delivered. County facilitation training will be offered to assist counties with communication regarding possible solutions to extremely difficult procedural and process issues. The number of workshops and trainings will be determined by assessment of local needs. The audience is county child welfare and probation staff, state juvenile court judges, commissioners, referees, judicial staff and attorneys.

This training activity supports the goal of Safety Objective 5, to “ensure that children are maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.” It also meets the goal of Permanence Objective 7, “prepare and support the workforce to help children and families reach positive outcomes” and Permanence Objective 10, “ensure that continuity of family relationships and connections are preserved for children in foster care.” The CDSS plans to continue this project into the future.

The Central California Regional Symposium was held in Fresno on November 15, 2005. This symposium focused on the nuts-and-bolts of applying ICWA in dependency and delinquency cases. There were more than 180 attendees. The symposium attendees included numerous county counsel, court officers, child welfare and probation staff, as well as tribal representatives. The evaluations received were very positive.

Resource binders have been created for the three symposia that have been conducted, two in 2005 and one in 2006. The resource binders were made available to all participants. The resource information is also available on CD and has been posted on the Judicial Council’s website. As new information is identified, it will be added to the resources.

One of the key speakers at the symposia was Justice William Thorne, Utah Court of Appeals. He is recognized as a foremost authority on ICWA and is requested to speak at numerous conferences/symposia/gatherings nationwide. A video has been made of his presentation, “An Historical and Cultural Perspective on ICWA,” and is available for use by any interested party.

Compliance Project staff presented a workshop entitled, “Current Issues in Practice under the Indian Child Welfare Act,” at the annual Beyond the Bench Conference. This Conference is the largest statewide conference for courts, State agencies, county child welfare and probation agencies, attorneys and children’s advocates. The workshop was a success with approximately 100 in attendance, one of the larger turnouts for a workshop at the conference.

The Compliance Project had the opportunity to work with the Riverside County Tribal Alliance for Indian Children and Families. This alliance consists of representatives from

the county courts, child welfare agency and tribes, tribal organizations and tribal advocates. As a result, the alliance has clearer direction on how to continue collaborating with all involved parties to ensure the protection of Indian families and children.

The Judicial Council has completed the “Judicial Handbook on ICWA.” This Handbook explains the requirements of ICWA and provides guidance to the courts on how to comply with the Act. It is being distributed to all of the local courts within State.

Tribal Youth

Tribal STAR is a project of the Academy for Professional Excellence. They provide a comprehensive, competency-based, interdisciplinary training and technical assistance program to those who provide services to Tribal foster youth. Their mission is to ensure that Tribal rural foster youth are connected to culture, community and resources throughout their transition to adulthood. Further, the goal of Tribal STAR is to develop and implement a training program to enhance frontline and supervisory staff capacity to provide effective child welfare services in rural Native American communities across California. The outcome of these training efforts will be the increase of positive outcomes of Tribal rural foster youth who are transitioning to adulthood.

Accordingly, Tribal STAR has created a training for frontline workers, The Gathering, and a training for supervisory/management staff, The Summit. The Gathering training was conducted on October 26–October 27, 2005, May 31–June 1, 2006 and June 21–June 22, 2006. Further trainings are scheduled for July 16, 2006 for the Summit and July 17–July 18, 2006 for the Gathering. Approximately 168 individuals were training in 2005/2006.

Additional information about this project and training programs is available at the website: <http://theacademy.sdsu.edu/TribalSTAR/Welcome.htm>

Native American Social Workers

The Master of Social Work program at California State University, Stanislaus, and the Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Project under a special contract with the CalSWEC, has spearheaded a full-time effort to recruit students from California’s Native American communities to the Title IV-E Master of Social Work program. This is part of the ongoing contract and training efforts with CalSWEC. The goal of the program is to improve the perception of both leaders and youth in the Native American community about the role of the university and, more specifically, about social work in their lives, and to promote the value of a career in public child welfare.

CalSWEC is in the process of conducting a five-year review to determine the level of participation of Native American students in the program.

COUNTY STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Counties provided various levels of in-service training to all their staff, which is described in an annual training plan. Counties are required to adhere to the Staff Development and Training regulations contained in the CDSS' Division 14 of the Manual of Policies and Procedures. These regulations serve as a guide to county welfare departments in the administration of county training programs. Division 14 provides the mandate and structure of county accountability in the development and implementation of training programs, annual training plans, evaluation and training need assessments. These regulations establish claiming and cost reimbursement criteria and guidelines for allowable staff development cost and activities.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

The Northern California Children and Family Services Training Academy is updating the current curriculum regarding the Multi Ethnic Placement Act so that it is available for use throughout the State for existing and new State and county adoptions workers commencing January 2006. Updating of the curriculum includes strengthening the training related to the inter-jurisdictional requirements.

The CDSS is working with the Administrative Office of the Courts, Center for Families, Children and the Courts (www.courtinfo.ca.gov) to develop joint training in the area of permanency for social workers and county counsel in 10 counties during State fiscal year 2005-2006.

County Counsel/Social Worker Joint Trainings

The purpose of this training activity is to further the IV-B Plan Training and Staff Development Goal of workforce preparation and support (Goal V: Prepare and support the workforce to help children and families reach positive outcomes) through multi-disciplinary training regarding permanency. This goal is achieved by: 1) providing specific training on case planning as related to reunification and other permanent plans and 2) providing training emphasizing respective participant roles in achieving systemic permanency goals.

This training activity falls under the following category necessary for the administration of the foster care program: preparation for and participation in judicial determinations.

These training activities are short-term. The duration of specific training programs varies according to type of training offered and audience served.

The trainings will be coordinated and overseen by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC); the AOC will contract with statewide and local training providers with experience in the specific subjects being covered by the trainings.

Since last year's report:

- Five trainings have occurred with 300 people trained.
- Significant accomplishments: were the establishment of county teams comprised of representatives from local child welfare departments, county counsel's offices and parents' and minors counsel; the identification of major local obstacles to permanency; and the development and implementation of targeted trainings designed to address specifically identified obstacles and role of system partners in mitigating same.
- No barriers have been encountered thus far other than a county employee strike in Santa Cruz that occurred the same day as the scheduled training.
- Plans for the future include follow-up trainings in 2006-07, and reconvening of county planning teams to achieve same.

TRAINING EVALUATION

The following outcomes were expected from July-December 2005 and have been met:

- Data from knowledge and skills tests will be analyzed, leading to initial validation of assessment instruments and protocols.
- A process for using assessment findings to review and revise curricula will be developed.
- A study will be designed to measure the effect of mentoring (field training) on transfer of specific skill from the classroom to the job.

Background:

The CDSS uses a multi-pronged approach to the evaluation of training programs. To address the ever increasing importance of evaluating training activities, the Macro Evaluation Team was established. The membership is comprised of representatives from the CDSS, county staff development organizations, Regional Training Academies (RTAs), the Resource Center for Family Focused Practice (RCFFP), and the Inter-University Consortium (IUC) in Los Angeles. The Team is charged with making recommendations about Statewide CWS training evaluation that includes the development of a statewide training evaluation framework, as mandated by California's PIP. Counties and RTAs can also access training from CalSWEC and national experts in training evaluation via the Macro Evaluation Team. This evaluation framework was first applied with the introduction of the common core curricula training for new child welfare workers and supervisors.

The framework addresses assessment at seven levels of evaluation, which together are designed to build a “chain of evidence” regarding training effectiveness.

These levels are:

- Level 1: Tracking attendance.
- Level 2: Formative evaluation of the course (curriculum content and delivery methods).
- Level 3: Satisfaction and opinion of the trainees.
- Level 4: Knowledge acquisition and understanding of the trainee.
- Level 5: Skills acquisition by the trainee (as demonstrated in the classroom).
- Level 6: Transfer of learning by the trainee (use of knowledge and skill on the job).
- Level 7: Agency/client outcomes - degree to which training affects the achievement of specific agency goals or client outcomes.

Establishing that training leads to an important part of the groundwork for tying training outcomes to program outcomes that is being laid by the field as a whole.

Benefits of implementing a framework for training evaluation:

- Data about the effectiveness of training at multiple levels (a chain of evidence) can be used to help answer the overall question about the effectiveness of training and its impact on child welfare outcomes.
- Data about training effectiveness is based on rigorous evaluation designs.
- Curriculum writers and trainers have data focused on specific aspects of training, allowing for targeted revisions of material and methods of delivery.
- Evaluation provides a standardized process for systematic review and evaluation of different approaches to delivery of training.

Implementation accomplishments to date:

- The common core curriculum for line workers and supervisors has been developed, piloted and implemented across the state. All new workers and supervisors now receive the standardized content in five priority areas. Two more standardized curriculum content areas will be completed by June 30, 2006.
- A system has been designed to track attendance and transmit information to the CDSS.
- The evaluation framework has been implemented, and data is being collected for all new line workers and supervisors who complete common core training.

- Prior to implementation of the common core, approximately 250 multiple choice items were written, reviewed, and researched to determine their evidence-base in the six priority content areas. Using the data collected as part of the evaluation framework implementation, these items are now being evaluated to assure their validity and to make sure that they do not discriminate based on gender, race or other demographic factors.
- In one area of the line worker core and one area of the supervisor core, an embedded evaluation to evaluate skills acquisition in the classroom has been developed, piloted and implemented. The embedded evaluation instrument is also being validated based on the initial rounds of data collected.
- Data from the common core evaluations have been collected and analyzed by CalSWEC. Reports are generated as the data is received, and are used to inform curriculum revisions and improve delivery of the training.
- Transfer of learning continues to be evaluated as part of the field training program at Central California Regional Training Academy.

Identified Barriers and Solutions:

Thus far, one principle barrier has been identified and overcome as the framework was implemented:

- The course-level evaluation used in the pilots of the common line worker core curriculum provided valuable feedback for the finalization of the standard curriculum content areas, but tight timeframes did not allow a second pilot to review the changes. As a result, substantial revisions were identified when the curricula were implemented. The course-level evaluation tools were therefore used to gather data for immediate revisions to the curricula. The revised curricula are expected to be completed, piloted and implemented by September 2006.

Future Plans:

- As noted above, the next version of the common core curriculum for line workers will be implemented in FY 2006/07.
- The evaluation framework will continue to guide the ongoing curriculum development and revision process, guided by the Macro Evaluation Team.
- Quality assurance procedures will be developed and implemented for the common line worker and supervisor cores.
- The data analysis from the field training evaluation will be used to make recommendations.

Policy Guidance and Information Provided to Counties

- An ACIN I-43-05 issued on August 5, 2005, provides information on the availability for CWS/CMS training services.
- An ACIN I-49-05 issued on September 8, 2005, provides information about the development of statewide standardized common core curriculum for all new child welfare workers, the placement cores for juvenile probation officers assigned to placement units serving Title IV-E eligible youth, and the standardized supervisor's core for child welfare/probation supervisors.
- An ACIN I-70-05 issued on November 22, 2005, provides information on National Parent Leadership Month.
- An ACL 05-06 issued on June 15, 2005, provides county agencies, local service providers and resource family training programs with the 41 learning outcomes/objective that should be included in the various resource family training curricula when training resource families.
- A CFL 05/06-31 issued December 8, 2005, provides information on the use of donated funds given to the county from a private source as a match for Title IV-E training at the enhanced federal financial participation rate.
- A CFL 05/06-33 issued December 8, 2005, provides information on the claiming training costs associated with Staff Development and Training at the enhanced rate and the non-enhanced rate.
- An All County Welfare Directors (ACWD) letter issued December 27, 2005, informs county welfare department of the statewide Foster Care Eligibility Training that was conducted in February 2006.
- A CFL 05/06-26 issued September 28, 2005 provides clarification to counties regarding allowable Title IV-E administrative expenses.
- The CDSS provided a statewide Adoptions Assistance Program (AAP) training workshop on October 25, 2005 in Southern California.
- The CDSS provided regional training on the AAP workshop on June 27, 2006 in Northern California.

Evaluation and Technical Assistance

EVALUATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Supporting Father Involvement Study

The CDSS entered into an Interagency Agreement with the University of California, Berkeley to conduct a study to: 1) determine the effectiveness of a particular intervention to increase positive father involvement and, 2) measure organizational culture change to determine if the family resource center implementing the intervention becomes more inclusive of fathers in other programs and services. The intervention is being implemented in Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, Tulare and Yuba Counties. Grantees are the CWS agencies in these counties which are required to partner with a local family resource center for implementation. The target population is co-parenting couples with children age seven and younger. Families are randomly assigned into one of three groups: 1) a one-time educational presentation about how positive father involvement improves outcomes for children; 2) a 16-week (2 hours per week) group meeting for fathers and, 3) a 16-week group for couples (2 hours per week). All project participants receive case management services. Data will be collected through a battery of assessments that will be administered three times during each family's participation in the study. It is anticipated that interim report will be issued in spring 2007, and a final report in 2009.

Significant Accomplishments

The principal investigators were retained through contracts with the Connecticut Department of Mental Health (to retain investigators from Yale University Medical School) and with University of California, Berkeley. Project meetings, to provide face-to-face training and technical assistance to staff of the five sites, were held in April and November of 2005; and, tentatively scheduled for May and November 2006. A project listserv that facilitates communication, training and technical assistance was launched in 2004 and continues to provide continuity in communication between sites, research team and CDSS. All clinical study sites (four family resource centers) have enrolled families into the study and are providing intervention services. Approximately 300 families will participate in this study.

The design of the Supporting Father Involvement study for low-income families involves random assignment to (1) a single-session information session (the control group), (2) a 16-week fathers-only group, or (3) a 16-week couples group. The same male-female staff pairs conduct interventions with all study participants. The first half of the expected 300 participants have completed a pre-intervention assessment and a post-intervention assessment 3 months after the groups end. The early results reveal no change in fathers' involvement in daily tasks of child care for control group parents, based on mothers' and fathers' reports. Fathers from the fathers-only groups report more involvement, but their partners' reports (the mothers) do not reflect a change in the men's involvement. By contrast, both fathers and mothers who participated in a 16-week couples group report that fathers do more of the hands-on tasks of rearing their youngest child than they had 9 months earlier. The couples group also has in impact on

maintaining both mothers' and fathers' satisfaction with the relationship as a couple, whereas the control participants show a more typical decline in relationship satisfaction over the same period of time. Finally, the couples group participants describe their children in less symptomatic and more positive ways than they had 9 months earlier -- more positively than the fathers group and control group participants describe their children.

In short, the results, especially for the groups in which both mothers and fathers participate, appear promising - in terms of fostering increased father involvement in their young children's care and parents' satisfaction with their relationships as couples. There is some indication from the group leaders' observations that participation in the fathers-only groups may yield positive results in the longer term. They will be conducting a second post-intervention assessment 18 months after participants enter the study to follow these early trends further.

Barriers/Unexpected Events

Initially, Sacramento County participated in the study as the fifth site. The Sacramento County site experienced difficulty identifying and engaging target population families, and it was decided that the intervention was not a good fit for the identified community. The CDSS and Sacramento County mutually reached an agreement that allowed the county to end its participation in the study and to provide alternate services to fathers who reside in the neighborhood of the FRC. Subsequently, the four remaining sites needed to plan to serve an additional 60 families to ensure that 300 co-parenting couples needed for the study complete intervention groups. In order to reach the target number of the study, the time period has been extended from September 30, 2006, to June 30, 2007.

Future Plans

The project will proceed as planned with the remaining four counties. Additionally, CDSS is in the process of expanding the study to new target populations within the current four sites. By July 2006, a dissemination plan will be developed for the purpose of providing practice information to other counties within California. A full description of the dissemination plan and implementation process will be provided during the next reporting period.

Promoting Safe and Stable Families

THE PROMOTING SAFE AND STABLE FAMILIES (PSSF) PROGRAM

California continues to use the Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) grant to operate and expand on a PSSF program that incorporates services covering the federally identified categories of Family Preservation, Community-Based Family Support, Time-Limited Family Reunification and Adoption Promotion and Support.

To verify that the CDSS has met the non-supplantation requirements for Title IV-B subpart 2 programs in Section 432(a) (7) (A) of the Act, we have compared the State and local funds spent in the State Family Preservation programs for FFY 1992 and FFY 2004. The State Family Preservation program is the state level program that relates directly to the Title IV-B subpart 2 programs. In FFY 1992, CDSS spent \$13,138,422 in State and local funds for this program compared to \$32,622,822 spent in FFY 2004.

CDSS has also verified that zero Title IV-B subpart 1 funds were used for foster care maintenance payments, adoptions assistance and child day care related to employment or training for employment in FFY 2004 compared to the maximum allowed of \$4,550,230 (FFY 1979 child welfare services total funds).

Selection Process for County PSSF Programs

California allocates approximately 85% of its PSSF grant directly to counties for the community provision of direct services and sets aside 15% of the total PSSF grant for State operated programs and administrative costs (no more than 10% of the total grant).

Each county selects programs for funding in accordance with its own needs assessment, and conducts procurement activities in accordance with local administrative requirements. This occurs at least every three years, as counties are required to develop and submit PSSF plans to the CDSS for review and approval on three-year cycles, including annual PSSF updates. The CDSS provides technical assistance to the counties, addressing the need for consistency and coordination among the C-CFSR, the county's SIP and the county's three-year PSSF plan. The CDSS reviews the three-year plans addressing the need for such consistency and coordination, prior to approving a county plan and authorizing its PSSF allocations.

Three-Year Plans

California has required counties to develop plans for use of the PSSF funds on a three-year cycle with annual updates based on federal fiscal year with the current cycle ending September 30, 2005. Accordingly, the CDSS has developed an instruction letter for the new three-year cycle of October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2008. However, to best address the findings of the federal CFSR, the State's PIP, the county SIP, the CWS System Improvement activities and the new Outcomes and Accountability System (AB 636), California is now requiring counties to combine their PSSF plans with their Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT)/Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention plans. The cycle will start July 1, 2005, and extend through June 30,

2008. The resulting consolidated plan will provide a more complete picture of the continuum of needs and services within each county and facilitate blending and maximizing of funds.

The new three-year PSSF county plans were due to the CDSS by September 30, 2005. The CDSS' OCAP has the oversight responsibility for the PSSF Program. As such, OCAP provides technical assistance to the counties. The technical assistance provided by OCAP stresses the need for consistency and coordination between the C-CFSR, CWS System Improvements and the consolidated three year plan.

Needs Assessments and Types of PSSF Services

Preventive services are determined by each county based on their own community needs assessment. Such assessments have identified a greater need for family preservation and support services in rural areas where isolation is a challenge to families needing preventive services. The needs assessments also show that the size of the population in these areas does not support a wide variety of adoption services.

On the other hand, these assessments show a greater parity among categories of services in the urban areas where a larger population base increases the need for, and provision of, family reunification, adoption and adoption support services.

As previously stated, it is the intent of CDSS to continue to have local community services funded by PSSF funds to follow PSSF program criteria in each of the four federal categories. Current examples of PSSF services provided by counties this year include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Family Preservation**

Programs such as in-home services for at-risk children and their families; programs providing follow-up care to families where a child has been returned after a foster care placement, including integrated case management, intensive home visiting and strength-based parenting services designed to improve parenting skills by reinforcing parents' confidence in their strengths.

- **Family Support**

Health screenings and physical examinations including kindergarten health check-ups, nutrition education classes, family assessment and referral services, strength-based parenting and parent leadership services, individual and group counseling, mentoring, gang intervention, and other services designed to enhance student success and youth enrichment programs.

- **Time-Limited Family Reunification**

Individual, family and group counseling; inpatient residential and outpatient substance abuse treatment; mental health; domestic violence; temporary child care; therapeutic services for families, including crisis nurseries; transportation to and/or from services; family assessment and referral services; case plan development; supervised and guided visitation services; father involvement services; in-home support; crisis intervention for children at risk of removal (emphasizing reunification when in the best interest of the children) and aftercare services to reunifying families.

NOTE: Unless specifically tailored for reunifying families (e.g., aftercare, case plan development and supervised visitation specific to targeted reunifying families), these services are also available under the other three categories.

- **Adoption Promotion and Support Services**

Services include, but are not limited to, adoptive parent recruitment, including public service announcements; orientations for pre-adoptive families to prepare them for adoptive home studies; parenting skills and training programs for adoptive parents.

The attached CFS-101, PART II: Annual Summary of Child and Family Services chart includes specific data on the estimated number of individuals and/or families to be served and the estimated expenditures by fund source for the services.

Identified Gaps in PSSF Services

Gaps in PSSF services have been identified through county-submitted PSSF updates, the C-CFSR process, and the CDSS' consultation process. These sources have identified that not all services are accessible to families in all geographic regions of the State.

Various gaps exist in rural areas. Lack of readily accessible transportation can impede service. Limited availability of appropriate foster family homes makes it more difficult to access and provide time-limited family reunification services. Smaller populations make adoptive parent recruitment and provision of post-adoption services more challenging.

The CDSS county contacts also revealed gaps in culturally-appropriate services specifically for Native Americans. The OCAP staff noted the following additional service gaps in their review of county self assessments and SIPs, which affect the four PSSF categories:

- Supervised visitation resources for children.
- Substance abuse treatment facilities for parents with young children.
- Post-adoption services.
- Respite care.
- Affordable housing.

Twenty percent minimum of PSSF funds are to be spent in each of the identified categories

Both the three-year plan instruction letter and the annual update instruction letter to counties require that a strong rationale must be provided for each decision where a county is not meeting the specified 20% minimum.

Although counties make their local categorical decisions based on local needs, the OCAP continues to instruct them on the 20% categorical spending requirement, monitor county expenditure data, and provide technical assistance and administrative assistance necessary to correct any issues. The OCAP monitors county expenditures quarterly to determine if additional technical assistance or development of a corrective action plan (CAP) is necessary for a county not meeting its goals as identified in the county three year plan and/or subsequent PSSF annual updates.

Each situation where there is a deficiency will be examined as to the reasonableness of meeting the goals on a county-specific basis. If there are reasons for not meeting each one of the goals, the specific county goals and the associated justifications will be documented. To ensure that the 20% goals are met on a statewide basis, the OCAP considers the information reported by each county when assessing the State's overall achievement.

There are some difficulties with reporting expenditures on a federal fiscal year basis, as the State allocates funds to the counties on a state fiscal year basis of July 1 to June 30. This means that when the State reports its expenditures, because of the nature of the State's budgeting and accounting system, it would include funding from two separate federal grants as well as funding from special projects, partially funded by the 15% set aside. Notwithstanding this, for federal fiscal year 2004, the State expended funds in the following proportions: for Family Preservation the percentage expended was 31%, for Family Support the percentage expended was 49%, for Time-Limited Family Reunification the percentage expended was 11%, and for Adoption Promotion and Support Services the percentage expended was 9%.

In reviewing the expenditures we have noted that there is significant improvement over SFY 2003-04; however, the expenditures are not to the minimum percentages we require. While efforts to work with the counties are described to improve the percentages are described in the section below, we have also decided to take other measures that are statewide in nature. We will be drafting an All County Information Notice to counties informing all counties of this situation. In addition, we will be working with the County Welfare Directors Association to also ensure that both county fiscal personnel as well as county program personnel are aware of the issue and that we will be monitoring expenditures. Counties receive instructions each year with their allocation letter as to the 20% categorical spending requirement, but we believe more emphasis should be placed on the requirement. We have had discussions with our fiscal staff in requesting their assistance in helping us monitor expenditures on a

quarterly, county by county basis. As the quarterly expenditure reports are issued, we will be discussing them with the counties who appear to be having difficulty meeting the minimum percentages.

Some of the difficulties experienced by counties in the 20% categorical spending requirement are that there are few funding sources for “up front” services such as Family Preservation and Family Support, where there are several funding sources to fund Adoption Promotion and Support Services. This requires counties who had built prevention and early intervention programs around the use of the funds under the original Family Preservation and Family Support Programs to seek other funding sources to make up the difference when funds had to be shifted to other categories. In addition, many counties had existing multi-year contracts with providers that needed to expire, be renegotiated and may even have necessitated finding new providers. Finally, there are some activities which we believe counties can legitimately claim to another category but aren’t aware of that information. Through working with both county program and fiscal staff we hope to achieve the 20% minimum spending requirement more quickly.

The Impact of Los Angeles County on California’s Percentage Deficiency

A significant issue with respect to the State’s inability to achieve the 20% spending requirement were the previous PSSF expenditure patterns of Los Angeles County. Los Angeles County in past years had not used PSSF funds for its Time Limited Family Reunification or for Adoption Promotion and Support services. This is highly significant for the State, as Los Angeles County receives the largest PSSF county allocation.

In response to our concerns, Los Angeles County submitted a CAP to the OCAP. Since then, the CDSS and Los Angeles County representatives have been in constant communication regarding their progress on the CAP. The Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) continues to make progress in all areas of their CAP. The most recent update from the DCFS shows that although the contracts have been finalized and services are being provided in all four categories, the county is moving toward the 20% spending requirement, but due to unanticipated delays, will not be able to achieve the 20% minimum by the end of this fiscal year.

The DCFS will meet the minimum in both Family Preservation and Family Support, but not in the other categories. For Adoptions Promotion and Support the Community Based Organizations (CBOs) have been slower than expected in preparing and providing services due to delays in hiring professional therapist staff with adoptions experience. In addition, CBOs were cautious in hiring staff due to the number of referrals that they were initially receiving. The DCFS will work with the CBOs regarding staffing issues and will promote the referral of clients in need of services. Since this is the first year of this component, full implementation is not expected until next year. For Time Limited Family Reunification, services were delayed due to the time required to prepare and execute the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Health Services (DHS) for alcohol and drug treatment services. The MOU has been

approved as of March 2006, and DHS started receiving referrals in April. With the MOU in place, DCFS expects to be within 20% next year. The CDSS will continue to support Los Angeles County with focused technical assistance regarding claiming and coordination of services to ensure PSSF compliance.

OCAP staff provided technical assistance to counties through in-person visits and via e-mail and phone calls that were not demonstrating a minimum of 20% expenditure in each category. Staff worked to bring them into compliance as they developed their three-year plans. Expenditure data for the final quarters is not yet available; however, counties are moving toward compliance and have developed their new three-year plans assuring a 20% minimum expenditure in each category and writing their contracts accordingly. The State is not yet at 20% for each category of service, since counties were giving permission to extend their existing contracts up to a year. However, with the progress made by Los Angeles in combination with the new county contracts, the CDSS expects full compliance soon. It will take from two to four quarters after county claims are initially submitted to ascertain the level of compliance as counties are permitted to amend claims for quite a while after the end of the quarter.

PSSF Linkages to Other Family Support and Family Preservation Services

The OCAP will continue working with counties to identify linkages with existing family support and family preservation services. The OCAP requires counties to submit a report annually that includes a request for information on linkages with other programs. Of particular interest to the OCAP is information that identifies county PSSF efforts linked to the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) cash assistance program, and other programs such as substance abuse, child abuse prevention, early intervention services, mental health, local correctional facilities and work force development.

Blending of Funds

The OCAP encourages counties to maximize services through linking to other fund sources. As a rule, counties blend funds from available sources that include the following programs: PSSF, Child Abuse Treatment Act (CAPTA), Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP), the California Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT) Program, the Children's Trust Fund, funds from tobacco tax, county funds, foundations and private donations. The intent is to maximize services by providing a continuum of services for children and families from all serving agencies.

DIFFERENTIAL RESPONSE

The PSSF Funds will be Used to Develop and Expand Family Support and Family Preservation Services

The PSSF funds will continue to be used to broaden the network of services that counties have available to serve families without having to open a case in the CWS

system. These services are essential for the early intervention intake system within a Differential Response framework. They will allow CWS to respond earlier, with greater flexibility, and with customized services and support for families ensuring child safety and reducing or eliminating re-entry into the CWS system.

Differential Response is an intake system which allows the child welfare agency to respond in an individualized manner to referrals based on the unique needs, resources and circumstances of the family. It is designed to engage the participation of vulnerable families and children currently not receiving services designed to improve the life skills of parents. For more information, please refer to the Safety Section of this report.

Expanded Family Support and Family Preservation Services Connect To Existing Preventive Services

Some communities have gaps in services so that families are not able to obtain the appropriate services when they need them. As a result, circumstances in the family often deteriorate to the point that CWS must become involved, and perhaps, remove children from their homes. By expanding on these services in a carefully planned manner so that they are integrated with existing services, a complete spectrum of core services may become available.

Differential Response redefines the relationship between the child welfare agency and existing and new community providers as partners in protecting children. The goal is that PSSF funds will be used to build this network of services through the partnership between CWS and community providers.

The overall goal of Differential Response is to provide support and preservation services to families before they become formally involved with the CWS agency. This process involves an active partnership with community based organizations, as well as other county service agencies.

Funds were budgeted for SFY 2005-2006 to support the following activities related to the CWS System Improvements, including Differential Response: 1) guideline development; 2) implementation planning; 3) development of community resources; 4) staff and community partner training and 5) implementation. Additional funds were included for these activities in the 2006-2007 budget.

Differential Response Linkages to Other Services and the Child and Family Services

Within California, the Differential Response strategy creates a new early intervention intake system in which the child welfare agency responds in a more flexible manner (with three response paths rather than one) to referrals of child abuse or neglect based on the perceived safety and risk factors present in the family. Services are provided based on the family's needs, resources and circumstances.

Path One assumes there will be no further involvement of CWS in the case unless the circumstances prove to be different than what was known at intake. These cases would be typically low or no risk of child abuse and neglect, but it is clear the family is experiencing problems or stressors which could be addressed by community services. Through this path, community agencies expand CWS ability to have someone respond, see the child is safe, preserve the family and provide support/services to families.

Path Two is for families that present with moderate risks of child abuse and neglect. Safety factors may not be immediately manifested in all cases, but risk is present. CWS will conduct an in-person contact (this contact may include a community partner). Services may be provided through CWS and/or partnership with community organizations to ensure that families are receiving services and support based upon their needs.

Path Three is for families that present with higher risk and/or safety concerns. These cases require a more immediate response to ensure child safety. CWS and law enforcement (where necessary) will be the key responders for this path. Through the support of county interagency partners and community service providers, services and support will be enhanced to ensure child safety within the home or in out-of-home care.

The Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) and CWS System Improvements

During SFY 2005-2006, the 11 pilot counties continued implementation of the Differential Response framework in targeted communities within their respective counties. Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) provides training and technical assistance to these counties (and 31 other counties) through December 2006 regarding the implementation of this new system. Some PSSF funds were used to fund the BSC.

As a result of the BSC trainings, counties learned how to effectively and efficiently study, test, evaluate and implement child welfare service practice changes. Learning sessions were held in which the counties gathered together for face-to-face learning, strategizing and networking. These sessions were led by national experts as faculty who mentor the participating county teams. Counties have been focusing on the following subjects:

- The intake structure as three pathways of service response and
- A standardized approach to assessment of safety, risk, protective capacity and needs.

Based on county input, at the end of the first year of this three-year contract, the CDSS worked with the contractor to make important adjustments beginning in the second year and continuing through the end of the project to the training and Technical Assistance (TA) activities being provided to the counties. There were an increased number of training sessions which were held regionally. These were full-day sessions and were targeted to the specific training needs for implementation of Differential Response.

The time period in between the Learning Sessions is called the Action Period. During this time the counties have been conducting Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycles to test and evaluate a series of small-scale changes with the goal of more rapidly bringing about a larger scale change in a particular area. During these Action Periods, the counties have had a series of collaborative conference calls to report their progress, receive technical assistance regarding their work and get feedback and insights from other counties. The calls were oriented around specific topic areas, such as Assessment, Partnering, Engagement and other topics pertinent to the implementation of Differential Response.

To assist counties in shared learning, the BSC developed an extranet message board on which counties post implementation objectives and outcomes, and share information on lessons learned in the process. The extranet was a method for the counties to learn both from each other and from the input of the faculty related to specific topic areas.

In addition, the training addressed a planning and evaluation component. Counties provided BSC with structured monthly reports on their progress and collect data to monitor and evaluate outcomes. To make sure counties were consistent in their approach to practice change, the training cross-referenced BSC with the Self Assessment and System Improvement Plan as delineated in the C-CFSR. There were a total of 43 counties represented within the three groups who received the training.

During SFY 2005-2006 (last quarter only) and SFY 2006-2007, the Child and Family Policy Institute of California will continue two core BSC activities to spread the learning and practice change that has occurred in the pilot counties to additional counties in California. These two core activities are:

1. Peer Technical Assistance

Teams will have an opportunity to participate in another phase of TA. Four mentor teams, all of whom are Differential Response pilot counties, will be matched with five mentee teams to further advance their implementation of Differential Response through the BSC method.

2. Extranet

The Child and Family Policy Institute of California will maintain the project extranet through 2006. The extranet is an interactive website that contains information about Differential Response implementation from both California counties and other states who have implemented DR. The range of information includes cycles of change counties have tried (PDSAs), forms, policies and procedures, national Differential Response research, practice guides and contact information from every participating county. The extranet also includes a discussion board where counties can pose questions and dialogue with one another about Differential Response implementation.

Child Abuse and Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Funds Integration and Coordination with Child and Family Services

Child Abuse and Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) funds are used to strengthen child abuse prevention services and support various demonstration projects that implement best practices for integration with the local child and family services continuum. The emphasis is on child abuse prevention services, including family preservation and support. For example, CAPTA funds are used to provide training and technical assistance that focus on FRC and the wide variety of child and family services they provide; the development and support of Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) in selected counties; by providing stipends to parents and foster parents so that they can attend statewide CRP meetings and the development and implementation of the Supporting Father Involvement (SFI) Study as a promising practice.

This year the SFI Study began testing a particular family-based intervention that is designed to enhance the positive involvement of fathers with their children and to enhance the organizational culture of FRCs to be more inclusive of fathers. In addition to the outcomes of the intervention, it is anticipated that the study will increase parent engagement into FRC services due to increased outreach and training and technical assistance for staff on skills related to community engagement, retention of families and expertise in referral strategies.

Small County Initiative II (SCI II)

Building upon the successes of the initial Small County Initiative, SCI II focuses on the unique needs of small counties (defined here as those with populations of 70,000 or less) supports expanding and strengthening the existing county prevention infrastructure and capacity to deliver services to small rural communities. The initiative provides additional funding and resources and also provides another link to local public and private prevention and family support activities.

Eleven counties³ were selected to participate in the initiative through a competitive process. These counties include: Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Del Norte, Glenn, Plumas, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne and Yuba. The selection process was based on how well the county identified and submitted a plan and budget to meet its needs in accordance with the established guidelines.

The implementation period for SCI II is January 1, 2004 through December 31, 2006, due to changes in State administration and processes around the grant/contract process, as well as delays in release of funding and start-up at the county level and the degree of implementation varies from county to county. Program funding is a combination of PSSF and CBCAP.

The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is evaluating SCI II, and has noted that overall the selected counties have made some progress with their preventive infrastructure and capacity to deliver services to rural communities. However, counties

³ Not to be confused with the 11 pilot counties implementing the CWS System Improvements.

by their own self-evaluation determined that they still need more effort in achieving their SCI II objectives.

Small County Initiative III

In SFY 2005-06, the OCAP also made available PSSF funds to the small counties that had not been selected for SCI II. The project is identified as SCI III and is a one-time allocation of \$50,000 to the following small counties: Colusa, Inyo, Lake, Lassen, Mariposa, Modoc, Mono, Sierra and San Benito. The requirements are more flexible with counties allowed to determine for themselves whether to use these funds internally to better strengthen their county infrastructure versus to use it to provide better preventive services, including strengthening their CAPC.

Overall, this project has shown great success. One very positive and direct benefit has been better communication and cooperation between the counties and their Child Abuse Prevention Councils as it has created open dialogue between these entities in identifying best use of the funds.

CONCLUSION

The State continues to take a strong approach toward PSSF program improvement. It is expected that quarterly fiscal expenditure monitoring, CAPTA assistance, the new intake structure referred to as Differential Response, the SCI II and SCI III assistance to selected counties, the CDSS technical assistance and reviews of the consolidated three-year county plans and related annual updates, along with the focus on interagency and community partnerships will all strengthen the PSSF Program. In addition, this approach is expected to strengthen existing linkages with other services and establish new ones where currently there are gaps. The State remains committed to achieving and maintaining compliance with all PSSF Program requirements.

Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project

Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Project Update

The California Title IV-E Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Project (Waiver Project) has been in a continuous extension phase since September 2003. Even though the extension was granted for five counties, only San Luis Obispo and Sacramento had chosen to continue through the entire extension period. Operating under the final six-month extension period from July 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005, the two remaining counties phased down their activities of the component and completed services for all of their children in the project. The counties transitioned participating children and their families into alternative programs to minimize disruptions and without compromising safety. Also during the final extensions, various meetings discussed strategies regarding the direction of the Waiver Project. The focus of the discussions centered on the continuation of the Wraparound services component under a new flexible funding waiver for Sacramento County. In September 2005, CDSS, DHHS and Sacramento County held meetings and conference calls to assist in providing a clear indication of the next steps to continue the project under a new flexible funding waiver. A subsequent decision was made not to put forth a request for a new waiver for Sacramento County.

Specific Accomplishments/Progress

The counties reported to the State their evaluation information and project status through progress reports, which they collected and maintained from their own processes and outcome data. Sacramento County's progress report information was developed by four non-profit providers operating Wraparound services as lead agencies in Sacramento County: Eastfield Ming Quong (EMQ) Children and Family Services, River Oak Center for Children, Stanford Home and Sacramento Children's Home. These providers have presented six-month progress reports to Sacramento County over the entire extension period. The four non-profit providers submitted their final progress report in January 2006, showing the impact of Wraparound services on youth in Sacramento County as of December 2005. Stanford Home for Children provided additional findings from their comparison of Wraparound and residential treatment services using an experimental design. The comparison study showed Wraparound was associated with a significant reduction in youth behavior impairment from intake to discharge. Wraparound was also associated with significant reductions in overall youth behavioral impairment when compared to traditional residential treatment services.

CDSS' final project status report is in review and being prepared for submission to DHHS. Sacramento County concludes that Wraparound services have been instrumental in enhancing a system of care, which promotes a cost effective use of funds designed to create community reliance versus agency dependence. This positive relationship with those who are crucial in making decisions about children is the first step towards improving outcomes for families. In this regard, the Waiver made an important contribution to the field of child welfare and mental health.

In an effort to maintain cost neutrality and coordination, San Luis Obispo County worked diligently to refine its methods of tracking Wraparound cases specific to outcomes. San Luis Obispo County reported, "We have been able to provide tailor-made services to fit a child's specific needs through the use of flexible funds." As the child improved, such funding allowed the reduction in services, which resulted in an efficient use of public funds and improved outcomes for children and families.

On March 31, 2006, the DHHS approved California's Child Welfare Waiver Demonstration Capped Allocation Project, which will block grant some of the federal title IV-E funds to be used for services and supports in order to avoid the over reliance on out-of-home care and reunify families more expeditiously.

Under this waiver, California will receive a waiver of certain provisions of title IV-E of the Social Security Act for the purposes of implementing a flexible funding demonstration project. Under the waiver demonstration, the State will receive capped allocations of title IV-E funds that will be disbursed to selected counties to provide direct services to children and their families, regardless of their IV-E eligibility or placement status. The specific goals of the waiver are:

- To improve the array of service for children and families and engage families through more individualized approach that emphasizes family involvement;
- To increase child safety without an over-reliance on out-of-home care;
- To improve permanency outcomes and timelines; and
- To improve child and family well-being.

The demonstration will target title IV-E-eligible and non-IV-E-eligible children ages 0-19 currently in out-of-home placement, or who are at risk of entering or re-entering foster care.

Implementation of the waiver demonstration may occur in up to 20 counties statewide. Counties will self-select subject to State approval to participate in the flexible funding demonstration and receive a capped allocation of IV-E funds. The estimated implementation date is January 1, 2007.

The evaluation will consist of three components: a process evaluation, an outcome evaluation, and a cost analysis. The State will contract with a third party to conduct the evaluation.

Indian Child Welfare Act

INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT (ICWA)

The CDSS continues to work with the 107 federally recognized California tribes, as well as the approximately 50 tribes that are not currently recognized. The activities/projects discussed below describe the measures that the CDSS continues to take to ensure compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

Specific Accomplishments/Progress

Child and Family Services Division ICWA Workgroup

The ICWA Workgroup was formed in July 2002. It continues to expand its membership and now consists of over 30 tribal ICWA workers/advocates, 10 county child welfare and probation representatives and 10 CDSS staff.

The ICWA Workgroup continues to meet bimonthly to identify ICWA issues/problems that exist and develop recommendations and solutions for tribes, counties and the State. Several accomplishments of the Workgroup this year are:

- Developed the CDSS ICWA training curriculum to place more of a focus on tribal culture and better meet the day to day application processes of ICWA for county child welfare workers and juvenile probation placement officers.
- Assisted the Judicial Council of California in the continuation of the ICWA Full Compliance Project.
- Collaborated with the author and sponsors regarding Senate Bill (SB) 678, new legislation that codifies the requirements of ICWA into California statutes.

Tribal/State Agreements

The CDSS has been pursuing tribal/state agreements which will allow for the pass through of Title IV-E funds to tribes. These funds will provide tribes with foster care funding for Indian children.

The CDSS continues negotiations of a Tribal/State agreement with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. Issues that were once barriers to completion of an agreement with the Tribe now have been eliminated. The most recent version of the agreement has been presented to the Tribe for their review, and the CDSS is awaiting their response.

The CDSS also continues negotiations of a Tribal/State agreement with the Karuk Tribe of California. While several items of disagreement still remain, negotiations on the Karuk Tribe agreement have gone much more expeditiously than the Washoe Tribe agreement. It appears at this time as though the Karuk Tribe agreement will be executed first.

The CDSS has received technical assistance from Region IX regarding funding issues for these agreements. Discussions of funding issues continue with the tribes and the effected county child welfare agencies.

ICWA Training Projects/Conferences

ICWA Curriculum Training

This year the CDSS contracted with the Resource Center for Family-Focused Practice (RCFFP), a part of the University of California Davis Extension Center for Human Services, to deliver training to increase coordination, knowledge and skills in implementing ICWA. The training stimulates greater understanding of tribal issues for individuals responsible for making decisions regarding Indian children and their families. Through the training process, participants developed skills on effectively engaging tribal members in cooperative relationships as well as assisting tribes in understanding and effectively negotiating with public child welfare agencies. Participants developed a greater understanding and appreciation of tribal challenges and historical barriers to effective relationships with government representatives.

The focus on the current year of this project has been to modify the CDSS' existing ICWA training curriculum to place more of a focus on tribal culture and to better meet the day-to-day application processes of ICWA for county child welfare workers and juvenile probation placement officers.

Annual ICWA Conference

The Annual Statewide ICWA Conference was held in June 2006. Many participants attended the conference including tribal ICWA workers; tribal advocates, tribal council members and community leaders; law enforcement; child welfare and probation staff; judges; attorneys; foster/adoption agencies; social services agency personnel and other interested parties. The mission of the conference is to support positive partnerships between tribes and federal, state and local governments for the benefit of all Indian children.

Additional training activities this year:

Indian Child Welfare Act Full Compliance Project

The CDSS entered into an interagency agreement with the AOC, to create the ICWA Full Compliance Project. The project was created because Indian children continue to be removed from their families and tribal communities and placed with non-Indian caregivers. While juvenile court judges and placing agency staff have received some training on ICWA, this project presents an opportunity to provide targeted training and technical assistance in order to increase knowledge of ICWA. The Project is designed to improve compliance with ICWA by making available a range of facilitation and training services through cross-disciplinary regional trainings of judicial officers,

attorneys, social workers and probation officers. Services will be tailored to the needs of the local county or region.

One regional symposium on ICWA was conducted this year. The Central California Regional Symposium was held in Fresno on November 15, 2005. This symposium focused on the nuts-and-bolts of applying ICWA in dependency and delinquency cases. There were more than 180 attendees, which included numerous county counsel, court officers, child welfare and probation staff, as well as tribal representatives. The evaluations received were very positive.

Resource binders have been created for the three symposia that have been conducted, two last year and one this year. The resource binders were made available to all participants. The information in the binders is also available on CD and has been posted on the Judicial Council's website located at: <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/cfcc/programs/description/jrta-ICWAResourceBinder.htm>. As new information is identified it will be added to the resources.

Coordination with Tribes Regarding the Section 422 Protections for Children

Congress enacted Public Law (PL) 280 in 1953, which required several states, including California, to assume criminal and some civil jurisdiction over all or part of Indian country within these states. PL 280 did not eliminate tribal jurisdiction. Although states were delegated criminal and civil jurisdiction, that jurisdiction remained concurrent with some aspects of inherent tribal jurisdiction. However, not all tribes have developed courts and so not all tribes exercise their jurisdiction.

There are very few Indian children in California under tribal jurisdiction, as only a small number of tribes have tribal courts and social services departments that could provide necessary services, partly due to the size of the tribes and the lack of adequate funding to the tribes for these services. For those tribes that do take jurisdiction, most often the initial contact regarding a family is made to the local child welfare agency who then contacts the tribe to allow them to take jurisdiction.

Many tribes and county child welfare agencies have developed protocols whereby they work together to provide child welfare services. A number of counties and tribes have convened ICWA roundtables/working groups which meet on a regular basis to discuss issues relative to the provision of child welfare services and how to better protect children. Some counties contact the tribal social services worker when an emergency response call is received allowing for both parties to respond to the family. Some tribes have services that can be provided early in the case to allow for the children and families to remain together.

The CDSS utilizes the ICWA Workgroup, which is currently comprised of over 30 representatives from tribes and tribal organizations, as well as representatives from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, counties and the State, as a means of consulting with tribes.

The tribal members of the Workgroup were chosen by the California tribes as their representatives to the CDSS. The Workgroup meets bimonthly to discuss ICWA issues and make recommendations on how to ensure implementation of the Act. Consultation also occurs via electronic mail.

Foster Care/Adoption Recruitment Plan

FOSTER CARE/ADOPTION RECRUITMENT PLAN

The CDSS' Role in the Family to Family Initiative

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) continues to contribute substantial resources to support the implementation of Family to Family in California. Approximately 85% of the 83,091 children in foster care in California live in a Family to Family county.

Family to Family counties are divided into four cluster groups. The clusters are organized by their approximate Family to Family implementation status and, when possible, geographic proximity. Los Angeles County has its own cluster grouping and is divided into three geographic areas. The following is a report on the progress of Family to Family counties in recruitment, training and support of resource families. Counties plan to continue many of these activities into 2007, and are planning for the next steps of implementation of the core strategies of Family to Family.

Currently, there are 24 counties involved in Family to Family. All counties are utilizing the Family to Family recruitment strategy, as well as the other core strategies.

A Family to Family website www.f2f.ca.gov is hosted by CDSS and maintained by CDSS staff.

Specific accomplishments/progress

Alameda County: The Recruitment Development and Support (RDS) workgroup meets bimonthly and their focus is on rebuilding relationships with and retention of current resource families. As these relationships continue to grow stronger, the workgroup planned recruitment and awareness activities. One of several recruitment strategies supported by the workgroup is the "Heart Gallery," a project featuring photographs of children and youth that will debut in April 2006. The traveling exhibit will be featured throughout the Bay Area with the purpose of promoting adoption and permanency for kids in care. Another recruitment effort is the ongoing monthly Brown Bag series for staff, community partners and resource parents. The Brown Bags feature youth's digital stories offering the real life scenarios that help to inform staff, community partners and potential resource parents. The RDS workgroup has assisted the Agency in planning and organizing two faith-based initiative convenings. The convenings have provided members of the faith community the opportunity to learn about the challenges of child welfare and how these challenges impact the community. Faith leaders have been asked to partner with the Agency to address the challenge of recruiting resource parents, supporting kin families and providing other support, such as space for resource parent trainings, birth parent orientation classes and TDM meetings. In June 2005, the Agency collaborated with community partners to host a Youth Town Hall meeting. This event featured a screening of the documentary "Aging Out" that was followed by a youth panel, addressing various aspects of the documentary and general issues concerning youth in care. The Youth Town meeting offered workshops, a

keynote speech by author Regina Louis, as well as resources and referrals. More than 150 participants attended the Town Hall meeting.

Santa Barbara County: Santa Barbara County Child Welfare Services is engaged in several on-going activities that have enhanced their visibility in the community. Their message is to invite the communities and the people of Santa Barbara County to be partners with them in strengthening families and children.

A supervisor and full-time bilingual recruiter/liaison was recently hired specifically for relative approval and foster parent licensing, recruitment, support and training. Recruitment efforts have shifted to focus on community-based needs. The county is focusing on recruitment of Spanish-speaking resource families and will be holding Spanish /Family to Family training. TV ads have been aired on local Spanish language TV. Ongoing general recruitment efforts are continuing and include information booths at local community events, newsletters, TV and newspaper ads, and “foster ware” information parties. Faith-based organizations have been active in assisting in recruitment and support by offering their facilities for speaking engagements and for foster/adoptive parent support groups. There has been a recent expansion in the recruitment and approval of relative/non-related extended family member homes. Relative finding will be a key strategy to increase permanency of children. The county has introduced the “home connection finders” model that focuses on finding both placements and connections for children who are entering and emancipating from care. Foster parent support groups have been a successful strategy for providing training and support for resource families and are regularly attended by county staff.

Contra Costa County: Children and Family Services (CFS) has three Community Engagement Specialists who commit 10% of their time to recruitment activities, especially in the targeted Family to Family areas and attend monthly RDS meetings. The liaisons provide follow-up assistance to potential applicants. CFS utilizes data on the numbers of removals and resource homes in the targeted Family to Family areas. The statistics are reviewed on a quarterly basis to measure the progress of this targeted recruitment. CFS holds monthly orientations across the county and has added additional orientations in the Family to Family targeted areas. An experienced foster parent has been contracted to attend orientations and provide follow-up calls to prospective resource family. The concept of Icebreakers was implemented countywide in January 2006. CFS continues to utilize Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE) training.

Fresno County: There has been a net increase of 15% to the number of licensed county homes in Fresno County since the implementation of Family to Family. Monthly Coffee Connections were established as neighborhood-based support groups for all resource families in those communities. Orientation and pre-placement training for adoptive and foster parents were consolidated. Focus groups, comprised of both resource families and social work staff, produced a set of shared expectations. These expectations will drive policy and practice for social work staff and will hold resource families accountable for their care of foster youth beginning 2006. In 2006, the

Wednesday's Child program was launched. It is an education program that runs on major TV stations featuring adoptable children. The first show generated almost 20 inquiries.

Glenn County: In spring 2005, the Glenn County RDS team held a resource family Family to Family training, which had great attendance. A RDS Speaker's Bureau was created to recruit resource families and has conducted approximately fifteen speaking engagements, primarily with civic organizations. The plan in 2006 is to expand to faith-based groups and school staff. Glenn County became part of the Youth Transition Age Team in the summer of 2005. This initiative is bringing in additional community partners, including business partners, to support foster youth with employment, educational and identifying supportive relationships towards independence.

Humboldt County: Since implementing Family to Family, Humboldt County's recruitment efforts have become more comprehensive. The RDS group meets quarterly and maintains data on resource family recruitment via total number of calls received, number of attendees at orientation, hours of training attended, etc. The RDS group is targeting the zip codes where there has been a high rate of removal for recruitment of resource families. There are now more recruitment in rural regions, with orientation and training held in these communities. There is an increased awareness to place siblings together in the same school district. Americorp workers at the Family Resource Centers, many located in schools, are assisting in recruitment efforts. Management has also begun meeting with local tribal representatives to address the disproportionality of native American children being referred to child welfare series and placed in out-of-home care. Improved support to resource families include: adding after-hours transportation of children for family visitations; developing a mentorship program for foster/kinship/adoptive parents and for foster youth with the local community college; holding quarterly meetings with Foster Family Agencies; completing a joint training with child welfare staff and resource families and holding an annual Foster Parent Appreciation Luncheon.

Kern County: Since the introduction of Family to Family, Kern has implemented a number of recruitment changes. The Foster Parent Orientation has been revised to include birth parents as members of the team. Two Foster Parent Coordinators, contract employees who are veteran foster parents, have been hired. They track foster parent applicants from the date of application until their departure. They gather information about how people learned about foster parenting, why they choose to give up their licenses and what their experience was like. Managers now attend every Foster Parent Association meeting. The agency director met with the Foster Family Agency Consortium and provided information on Family to Family. Foster Family Agencies were invited to participate in planning and training of staff and foster parents. Promotion efforts have been conducted through TV, radio, and billboards. A "Taking Care of Business Day" was held, primarily targeting African American families for recruitment as resource families. Kern County's first Icebreaker meeting was held in December 2005 and was facilitated by the family's court intake social worker.

Monterey County: Targeted recruitment efforts have increased this year, including a first ever booth at the county fair, public service announcements created with the local TV station, flyers distributed on pizza boxes and with a local auto repair shop, and increased recruitment in the lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/questioning (LGBTQ) community. A bilingual, bi-cultural social worker was recently hired to focus on recruitment efforts, working closely with the RDS committee. The recruitment committee is revising a system to ensure follow-up with families at all levels of interest. The respite and support training curriculum has been revised and childcare is now provided at caregiver trainings. Trainer guides and materials in both English and Spanish have been developed. The community liaisons have the lead responsibility in recruiting, assessing and matching the respite and/or support providers with their families. The county and local community college has expanded efforts to provide a broader spectrum of training for caregivers. Pre-service training in both English and Spanish and initial trainings for relative caregivers have included presentations by foster youth and birth parents.

Orange County: A grant was recently secured to develop an effective campaign to recruit resource families. Extensive recruitment and “foster ware” parties are occurring in targeted communities where the highest numbers of children come into foster care. In January 2005, Orange County began full implementation of the Family to Family/PRIDE, a series of nine classes provided for prospective resource families. Major components of PRIDE include the participation of veteran foster parents as equal partners in the training process and targeted skill building to help foster parents better engage birth parents. Quarterly events called Celebrating Families bring staff and reunified parents together to celebrate each parent’s successful completion of family reunification. Parents attending these events are also invited to partner with the agency in an advisory capacity and have now formed a group called Parent’s Taking Action.

Placer County: The RDS team has implemented a recruitment plan that includes increased efforts at churches, community festivals and other events. The new Foster Family Recruitment Specialist has significantly increased recruitment efforts. Thousands of recruitment brochures have been distributed throughout the county. The PRIDE resource family training program has been revised to include presentations by foster and emancipated youth, birth parents that have not reunified with their children and resource parents. The PRIDE trainings are expanded to two communities and classes are full. Communication with caseworkers has improved with better e-mail access from resource families. In addition to an annual picnic to recognize caregivers the new Rewards, Appreciation, Honor (RAH) program offers rewards for training attendance and small prizes to recognize special efforts.

Riverside County: A CWS/CMS research of available resource families in January 2005 found 17 licensed foster and adoptive homes in the target area. After contact and engaging with these families, 6 were immediately ready to resume fostering; while the remaining required follow-up certification or re-training. By January 2006, a total of 31 resource families (including adoptive homes) are now available in the target area - increasing by 82% over the 12-month period. Over the course of the year, two new

recruitment and support contractors continued their activities: one for “targeted recruitment” of resource families in the target area; the other for “24/7 peer support” for all the existing resource families. To ensure recruitment follow-up a centralized inquiry telephone line with a “customer-friendly” script is now in place with a live person always answering all calls.

Sacramento County: Recruitment efforts are focused on communities where the majority of children were coming into care but historically has had the least foster homes. PRIDE training was recently offered in both English and Spanish, utilizing the expertise of foster youth, birth parents and foster parents to educate new foster parents. As a result of the new recruitment strategy, 50 new resource homes were licensed. A Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner, a Foster Family Picnic, and the first annual Foster Parent Holiday Gala were held in appreciation of resource families.

San Diego: The County developed an internal infrastructure with a Family to Family Agency Coordinator as the lead and a Regional Coordinator assigned in each of the six regional sites throughout the county. The faith-based community has been active in helping with recruitment and support efforts by offering their church facilities for speaking engagements and for foster parent support group meetings. Regional staff provides respite events, picnics/luncheons and award banquets for foster parents and adoptive parents. San Diego County has contracted with Community Services for Families to provide more services to clients, including recruitment, retention, and participation in TDM meetings. Foster Parent PRIDE training is provided through the Community College system. Foster youth and adoptive parents are able to share their experiences at these trainings. The Foster Friends Outreach Committee created the “8 Great Ways to Help” poster, flier, and power point presentation for coordinated recruitment efforts. “Way Station” foster homes have been developed in all six county regions. Way Station homes allow children to remain in their own communities; thereby diverting children from the emergency shelter care facility.

San Francisco County: A first placement support protocol was developed where designated support staff provides “First Response” services to assist Resource Families when they receive their first placement. Staff continues to work with the family throughout the first year and families are connected with a foster parent mentor. The number of foster parents participating in the RDS team has increased, a foster parent is the co-chair and the team includes two Latino foster parents. Since July 2005, ten new homes have been licensed, with ten more potential homes and four Spanish-speaking homes pending. Brown Bag informational meetings for foster parents are scheduled bimonthly and are well attended. The staff provides specific meetings and consultation for Latino foster parents. Four Latino foster parents recently attended the PRIDE training to assist in pre-service and mentoring. The team updated the Action Tracking Plan and the RDS chairs introduced the Icebreaker concept. To improve communication between Licensing and Placement Units, there is now cross representation on meetings: RDS and Placement Units meet regularly regarding resource families and Placement staff regularly participates in RDS. The Medical Advisory Committee workgroup is a partner in addressing issues regarding medically at-

risk children and partners with public health nurses to outreach and recruit for medically trained foster parents. There is a continued effort to recruit homes for teens, with participation in two radio interviews, community events and the county fair.

San Mateo County: The Human Services Agency (HSA) in San Mateo County continues to focus on maintaining and recruiting resource parents and involving community partners in these efforts. The HSA's Homefinding Unit, in partnership with Kinship Support Services, and other community stakeholders, has been instrumental in recruitment and training efforts throughout the county. Recruitment efforts have run the gamut from advertising at local movie theatres and public transportation buses to attending PTAs and holding "brown bags" at local hospitals, always in partnership with a foster parent.

The TDM Supervisor is developing a training curriculum for foster parents by agency-trained facilitators. A new Foster Parent Liaison, who reports directly to the Children and Family Services Director, has been hired. The Liaison helps bridge the link between social workers and foster parents, resolving policies and procedures issues, facilitating support groups and addressing issues faced by foster parents. A respite care contract has been secured to support resource parents and foster children/youths. Strengthening supports for resource families remains a focus area in the County. The HSA continues to partner with the Foster Parent Association (FPA) to advance the development of the mentoring program to assist foster and adoptive parents. Licensed foster parent families may also access the FPA and the Foster Parent Support Group for assistance and advocacy.

San Luis Obispo County: The RDS Committee has broken into three sub-groups to better focus on areas of improved practice. Relative and non-relative extended family member placements are significantly above the State average, while group home placements are significantly below the State average. Foster Family Agencies and Foster Parent Association partners provide a wealth of recruitment, training and retentions ideas and strategies that the county has utilized. Targeted recruitment efforts are based on monthly data self-assessments. Digital stories, coffee sleeve promos and a major public awareness campaign are in progress, including the Heart Gallery project. The local California Youth Connection chapter is developing a curriculum for training to staff, foster parents and community partners. Icebreakers have been implemented on a small scale. This year's focus is on increased resource parent, birth parent and youth involvement; and increased collaborative recruitment strategies in conjunction with local Foster Family Agencies. The RDS Committee has been working with Children's Services Network to host a county-wide conference on foster care recruitment and retention.

Solano County: Solano County has selected the city of Vallejo as the target recruitment area. Foster parent pre-service training is now being offered in Vallejo. Solano County is partnering with the Vallejo Family Resource Center for outreach and education to the general and faith-based community. The workgroup has developed a questionnaire for foster parents to assess current working relationships between social

workers and foster parents. Joint training opportunities for social worker and foster parents are offered monthly. Family to Family trainings have also been offered to community partners and there is a kinship support group that meets weekly.

Stanislaus County: Stanislaus County has focused on building community partnerships to increase neighborhood based foster care. The Family to Family/PRIDE curriculum was implemented for all potential resource parents and PRIDE sessions are offered throughout the year, at different times and days. Prospective families can start PRIDE at any point throughout the series in order to reduce lengthy waiting periods. Resource families receive support through a mentorship program, on-going education with Modesto Junior College, monthly resource parent newsletters, contact with the licensing and recruitment staff and regular events and activities for the resource families. Stanislaus County has a close working relationship with the Foster Parent Association. Social workers are introduced to new resource families through the monthly PowerPoint of new and existing families, a quarterly “Coffee Connection” which brings together families and social workers, as well as the opportunity to participate in Family to Family/ PRIDE sessions.

Santa Clara County: The Resource Family Support workgroup has helped shift recruitment efforts from internal and centralized to community-based and regional. The Resource Family Support Team was developed to provide additional support for the county’s licensed resource home providers. The team is comprised of former or current foster parents. Each resource home advocate is assigned to a specific family and participates in TDMs whenever a placement change occurs. Santa Clara County also has a Foster/Adoptive Parent Resource Center. Santa Clara County has adopted a new Relative Care Support Program. This is a comprehensive menu of services for relative care providers, including crisis intervention Wraparound services, development of a relative support team with a behavior management specialists and immediate care packages for all first-time relative placements.

Tehama County: Tehama County has initiated a joint recruitment effort in collaboration with several local foster family associations. This partnership has been actively recruiting new resource families using a variety of techniques including bookmarks in libraries, flyers on pizza boxes and brochures. Tehama County is working to improve the relationships of social workers and foster parents. The Family to Family Coordinator attends the monthly meetings of the Foster and Adoptive parent Association and a foster parent survey was recently conducted to analyze how to improve services. Recruitment will be an integral part of the speaker’s bureau presentation being developed in conjunction with the community partnership group. Foster youth and foster parents are a part of all of the county’s PRIDE training.

Trinity County: Trinity County is working to increase the number of foster families including faith-based outreach, direct advertising, direct mailings to foster families with training information, a mentoring program, a holiday event for foster children, improving information of the foster care website, providing parent partner training, providing a FAQ for social workers who work with foster families, increase placements with non-related

extended family members and child care reimbursement for foster families, including birth and foster families. Americorps workers are placed in schools to provide responses to concerns and to act as a family advocate for families in those areas.

Los Angeles County: The Permanency Resources Division continues to work on consolidating the recruitment of foster and adoptive parent(s); orientations; and pre-service training; and the home study process for any family approved for out-of-home care. Three conferences were held in January and February 2005 with child welfare staff from every office in Los Angeles to launch Family to Family countywide.

A five-year recruitment plan was developed as the guiding recruitment tool for specialized targeted populations of adoptions (child-specific), cultural-religion-language, medical fragile, sibling and teens. The Recruitment Partnership Forum met quarterly to redefine, refine and implement the five-year plan. Specific and updated written information about the target populations are now included in the orientation packets and made available as outreach information for community activities and events. All prospective resource parents are required to attend 33 hours of pre-service training and are approved at the adoption level. To meet the specific support issues of caregivers, each regional office in partnership with its caregiver communities is authorized to develop and implement a caregiver friendly system to identify and resolve caregiver support needs. The DCFS Training Section assists with the planning and implementation of specific training issues for caregivers in February 2006, an RDS conference for DCFS managers was scheduled to assist with targeted planning and implementation.

Ventura County: Foster youth are now featured in the training of foster parents with positive response from prospective foster parents. Management regularly attends the foster parent association meetings. Many positive outcomes have resulted from this improved relationship with foster parents; several foster parents are now willing to participate in work groups, provide input upon request and serve as trainers and mentors to other foster parents. The partnership with the Ventura County Community College District has continued to develop. The foster parent training series is consistent with actual business practices. Geographically based foster care information sessions along with entire training services will occur within the next few months. Support to resource families has improved with the hiring of a foster care ombudsman to attend to concerns raised by foster parents and information.

GENERAL RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES

These activities will continue into the next FY 2007. We have established a partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and we also plan to continue the events at the State Capitol and with the 58 counties.

Family Builders by Adoption (California Kids Connection) Program

The Family Builders by Adoption Program is the California on-line adoption exchange registry of (1) children whose placement plan is adoption and (2) qualified families

approved for adoption by public and private agencies. An adoption exchange is an organized means of sharing information about available children and searching families. The exchange also facilitates permanence on a local, regional, statewide and nationwide level for California's children. Services include an internet registry site, a photo listing book, exchange meetings, matching events and training and education for caseworkers. In addition, Family Builders is the California Resource and Recruitment Team for the National Adopt US Kids Campaign. The contractor provides the CDSS with monthly data reports. These reports reflect cumulative totals of children who are registered, successful matches, adopted, ethnicity, legal status and training provided, to name a few of the statistical categories of data currently being captured. Data specific to queries not currently listed on the reports may be extrapolated upon request. For the last quarter of 2005, there were an average of 450 children listed in a given month and a total of 2,147 numbers of inquiries from qualified and approved families. Currently, 26 public agencies (46% of all public agencies) participate in exchange meetings and list children on the exchange. They have 25 private agencies listing families on the exchange site. This represents 61% of the licensed agencies who offer foster-adopt services. In the May 2006 Monthly Activity Report Family Builders by Adoption reports that 557 successful matches have been made since January 2001.

Foster Care Initiative (Assembly Bill 2129)

Assembly Bill (AB) 2129 (Chapter 1080, Statutes of 1993) made funds available in the annual Governor's Budget county allocations through the CDSS to support county recruitment efforts. All counties are responsible for recruiting foster and adoptive families and pursuant to the passage of AB 2129 are required to complete the annual year end report/survey in order to be eligible for the funding. The report is designed to collect recruitment, training and retention program data and accomplishments achieved during the fiscal year. The counties are required to submit a year-end report outlining their recruitment, training and retention program data and accomplishments achieved during the fiscal year regardless if the activities are funded by AB 2129 funds, county funds, grants, contributions, or other funding streams. This data is compiled into a comprehensive report for statewide distribution, via the internet (see below) that can be used by the State and counties in planning future activities. This report is called the Resource Family Recruitment, Training and Retention Annual Report 2005. The community colleges, counties and foster parent associations collaborate to complete the report. The data from the online survey is shared with counties in a report that is sent out to all 58 counties and discussed at quarterly Regional meetings, as well as at Family to Family meetings for resource families.

The answers to the 2006 survey questions are still being evaluated, and the report should be completed and posted on the internet in about September 2006. All data appears to support that the number of families attending orientation has increased, as well as the number of resource families.

The previous report indicated many positive results, including a four percent decrease in caseload from the previous year of the same time period and at the same time displaying an increase in the number of bilingual staff as a result of the cultural diversity

of children entering the child welfare system. Additionally, the report corroborated a long assumed belief that the most effective recruitment sources and materials utilized were other resource families/friends and newspaper advertisements. The categories of children for which counties conducted specialized recruitment of potential resource families were adolescents, youths, infants born substance abuse exposed, and sibling sets. The categories of children most difficult to recruit for or place with resource families were adolescents with psychological or mental disabilities, youths with psychological or mental disabilities, and adolescents/youths with substance abuse. The report further strengthened the resolve that enhanced recruitment, training and retention must continue in order to allow California's children in out-of-home placement an opportunity to live in safe, stable and permanent homes.

The report can be accessed on the CDSS' Children and Families Services Division website at <http://www.childsworld.ca.gov>, under "Foster Care Reports" or the California Family to Family website, <http://www.f2f.ca.gov>, under the "What's New" section. The Report for 2006 is being collated and should be on the site summer 2006.

In addition to their annual report, many counties also addressed recruitment in their SIPs. A number of counties identified recruitment strategies in their most recent SIPs, which were submitted on September 30, 2005, in order to increase the number of resource families. Some counties identified media outreach as part of their strategy. Others identified faith based outreach efforts, targeted recruitment (such as for sibling groups or older youth), education of the community on the need for foster parents and the children who need homes, media campaigns and booths at community events as their planned strategies to recruit more resource families. CDSS is adding a question to the survey to capture information regarding the recruitment of families that match the race and ethnicity of children in care. For AB 2129, we have an online survey for the counties to complete as explained above, and the annual year-end report comes from information contained in the survey.

Toll-Free Hotline

Some recruitment is done through the toll-free hotline. The hotline receives approximately 500 calls a month regarding Adoption and Foster Care. When a call comes in with a question regarding the Adoption or Foster Care process, the staff will answer the question if they know the answer. If not, the call will be directed to the welfare department in the county where the caller resides. Fifty-five percent of the calls come from Los Angeles, Sacramento and Orange counties. Calls are also received from Nevada and Arizona.

Perinatal Substance Abuse/HIV Infant Program (formerly known as Options for Recovery)

Currently, there are 10 counties participating in the Perinatal Substance Abuse/HIV Infant Program. Recruitment efforts counties have undertaken related to the Program include: San Diego County has included a recruitment flyer in the information packet distributed at the Foster Home Licensing Orientations throughout the County. They are

developing a website to provide visibility for their program and user-friendly information to recruit more parents. Recently, Shasta County launched a large recruitment campaign. They have monthly support groups and a strong networking system that provides positive reinforcement of their program as well as word-of-mouth recruitment. In 2006, the CDSS is looking to host an all-county meeting enabling the counties to share tried and true recruitment ideas and procedures.

Specialized Training for Adoptive Parents (STAP)

The STAP Program provides specialized recruitment, training and services to pre-adoptive/adoptive parents of children born HIV positive and/or substance exposed. The program is designed to assist the adoption of medically fragile children who are dependent children of the court, have an adoption case plan and reside with pre-adoptive or adoptive parents.

Participating counties are required to provide a training curriculum which includes all of the following:

- Orientation;
- Effect of alcohol and controlled substances on the fetus and children;
- Normal and abnormal infant and early childhood development;
- Special medical needs and disabilities;
- Recovery from addiction to alcohol and controlled substances;
- Self-care for the caregiver;
- HIV/AIDS in children;
- Issues in parenting and providing lifelong permanency and substance abuse prevention to children with prenatal alcohol and other controlled substances exposure; and
- Issues specific to caring for a child who tests HIV positive.

There were no programmatic changes to the STAP Program in SFY 2005/2006. However, there are eight counties participating (two more counties than reported in SFY 2004/2005 and two less than in years prior to SFY 2004/2005). The decrease in county participation appears to be caused by both county budgetary and staffing problems.

The CDSS will continue to provide technical assistance to those counties participating in the program and to any counties that submit a plan to participate in the program.

Foster Care Month

The CDSS, the counties, and a collaboration of organizations, legislators, private foundations, foster parents and youth gathered at the State Capitol on May 2, 2006, to participate in the kickoff for Foster Care Month. The event launched National Foster Care Month in California and raises public awareness about foster children and young people's needs for permanent life-long connections with adults, and other foster care system improvement efforts. This year's Capitol event honored visionary efforts that

have enriched the lives of foster youth and highlighted bi-partisan leadership efforts to fulfill the foster care system's promise of safety, permanency and well being for the children it touches. Assemblymember Karen Bass and the Assembly Select Committee on Foster Care and the Blue Ribbon Commission on Foster Care were also honored for bringing focus to foster care system improvement needs. The event was well publicized, with a number of television stations present to cover the event, as well as being reported in several newspapers statewide. In addition to the State event, there were numerous county based Foster Care Month events held throughout the month of May.

Other Activities

A project of interest in terms of recruitment activities is the Alameda County's Group Home StepUp Project: Moving Up & Out of Congregate Care. The project was funded through assistance from Casey Family Programs and the California Permanency for Youth Project. This was a six-month project designed to improve the long-term outcomes for adolescents in group home care. Alameda County made a commitment to focus on "mining" cases and using web based search technology to find family members. The target group was youth, ages 11-18 years, who had been placed in group home care for a significant length of time.

There were 72 youth assigned to the project, which was more successful than anticipated. After 6 months, 36 youth left group home care and were placed with family. Another 6 youth were waiting for placements with family within the next quarter. There were 3 youth who had pending ICPC applications awaiting approval for placement with family in other states. Eight of the youth were connected to family, and placements were possible within the next quarter. Four of the youth were placed in transitional housing programs, with family involved in the decision making and supporting the placement. Another 12 of the youth remained in group homes, and were progressing in treatment, in large part because of support from newly found family now involved in treatment and visiting the youth. Many of the youth's behavioral troubles subsided when connected with family. One youth was still building relationships with family, with the possibility of a future placement. Only 2 of the youth were found placements through "traditional means" with foster family agency foster parents.

Success was almost exclusively due to placements with parents, relatives and non-related kin—not with finding foster homes as was originally believed. Extensive efforts were made by the County to create financial incentives in the form of special rates for county foster parents willing to commit to caring for youth moving out of group homes. Licensing staff discussed this prospect with all prospective county foster parents. No placements were made with county foster parents, despite this effort. The project succeeded due to the locating of family, which has many implications for the recruitment of permanent homes for older youth, particularly those who are placed in group homes.

Specific Progress and Accomplishments Related to Diligent Recruitment

Throughout the year, the 11 largest counties meet twice a year for a “convening/training” around topics such as recruitment/training and retention of foster parents, youth permanence and disproportionality. The CDSS, in partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, provided the technical assistance and training to these counties.

Adoptions Program

ADOPTIONS PROGRAM

Intercountry Adoption

Activities That the State Has Undertaken For Children Adopted From Other Countries, Including the Provision of Adoption and Post Adoption Services

Under California law, the provisions of services to facilitate an intercountry adoption fall exclusively within the purview of licensed private adoption agencies. California's intercountry adoption program provides for two kinds of adoptions, those finalized in the child's country of origin (Adopt Abroad) and those finalized in California. In each case, pursuant the California Code of Regulations, a California adoption agency, in order to provide intercountry adoption services, is required to have an agreement with a foreign agency that, in part:

- Verifies that the foreign agency is authorized to place children for inter-country adoption under the laws of its country;
- Specifies the responsibility of the foreign agency for the care of the child, including medical care and financial support; and
- Specifies the authority and responsibility of the foreign agency in relation to placement, disruptions, finalization of the adoption or the return of the child to his or her native country.

Based on such agreements, California licensed intercountry adoption agencies perform home studies on perspective adoptive parents, provide required post-placement supervision on adoptions finalizing in California, and may provide post-finalization supervision as required by the child's native country if the adoption is finalized in that country. Agencies also assist with re-adoption if required by Homeland Security in the Adopt Abroad program. Additional information about California's intercountry adoption program may be found in the California Code of Regulations section 35241 et seq.

Children Who are Adopted From Other Countries and Who Enter Into State Custody as a Result of the Disruption of a Placement for Adoption or the Dissolution of an Adoption, Including the Number of Children, the Agencies Who Handled the Placement or the Adoption, the Plans for the Child, and the Reasons for the Disruption or Dissolution

In each case, pursuant to the California Code of Regulations, the California adoption agency, to provide inter-country adoption services, is required to have an agreement with a foreign agency that meets the regulatory requirements stated above.

Furthermore, California Family Code section 8903 provides that, "For each inter-country adoption finalized in this state, the licensed adoption agency shall assume all responsibilities for the child including care, custody, and control as if the child had been

relinquished for adoption in this state from the time the child left the child's native country."

Based on the provisions of California law described above, a child that comes to California through an intercountry adoption process is not allowed to enter foster care if the adoption disrupts. Therefore, there were no children who have come to the United States for the purpose of adoption who entered foster care prior to the finalization of the adoption. Similarly, since there can be no foreign born children in such circumstances, there will be no agency to identify, nor corresponding reporting on any plans for such children or reasons for the disruption of adoptive placements prior to finalization.

The CDSS adoptions district offices, who have the sole responsibility for investigating all petitions to set-aside adoptions (dissolutions) in California, reported that in the last year, there have been no dissolutions of intercountry adoptions.

Cross-Jurisdictional Plan and Probation Data

CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL PLAN AND RESOURCES

The CDSS has continued to increase the use of cross-jurisdictional resources for adoptive placements, which include recruitment strategies such as the California Kids Connection Program/Website. Statewide, five programs have met monthly to share specific information regarding family and children. A support coordinator is responsible for assisting in matching waiting children with available families identified by the exchange. This website has, and will continue to have, both a secure and a public website. The public website is accessible to any Internet user. Visitors indicate their interest in specific children by sending an e-mail to the placing agency identified for each child. Many public adoption agencies throughout the State also maintain their own website featuring children who are available for adoption.

AdoptUSKids website is the result of the Children's Bureau Initiative, a collaborative funded by the Adoption Exchange Association, Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families and the Children's Bureau. The California Kids Connection, Recruitment Response Team is a part of the Children's Bureau's national recruitment initiative campaign for finding potential adoptive families. California's adoption exchange program, California Kids Connection provides several important services, all of which have the final goal of finding permanent homes for children who are available and waiting in the foster care system.

The California Kids Connection, Recruitment Response Team has been very successful in finding permanent homes for our foster children/youth. For the quarter ending March 2006, there was an average of 440 children listed with an average of 599 inquires for qualified and approved families for that period. At the present time, 46% of all public agencies participate in exchange meetings and list children on the exchange, as well as 25 private agencies that participate by listing families on the exchange site.

During SFY 2003-2004, the number of cooperative placements was 2,538. The number of cross-jurisdictional placements has continued to increase each fiscal year. California is committed to increases in cross-jurisdictional placements with a continued effort to further streamline the adoption process. To facilitate cross-jurisdictional placements, the State: 1) issued an ACIN clarifying State and federal law regarding cross-jurisdictional adoptions; 2) amended the adoption regulations handbook referencing current State law regarding cross-jurisdictional adoptions; 3) reviewed the existing regulations for consistency with cross-jurisdictional adoption requirements; and 4) amended training curriculum to include cross-jurisdictional adoption requirements. The Governor has proposed increased funding in adoptions for SFY 2006-07, which is anticipated to facilitate cross-jurisdictional placement as well.

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES CASES TRANSFERRED TO PROBATION

Description of the number of children under the care of the State child protection system who are transferred into the custody of the State juvenile justice system

Methodology:

Two separate data files were created for the year under review using an extract from the CWS/CMS. The first file represented closed child welfare supervised placements. The second file represented Probation supervised placements with start dates within the same year. Children that appeared in both files were unduplicated and counted. Please see the following data table for results.

CWS/CMS

Children with WIC 300 and WIC 601/602 authority codes within a given year*

Federal Fiscal Years	Number of Children
1999/2000	559
2000/2001	644
2001/2002	709
2002/2003	643
2003/2004	815
2004/2005	994

***Data Caveat:**

This data should be considered preliminary, as the State is still exploring the most accurate data method to identify this population as well as a means of validating the data. Data from the CWS/CMS, California's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) system, is able to identify the number of children in out-of-home placement supervised by CWS, who have been terminated from a CWS placement, then subsequently placed in a Probation-supervised placement within a given Federal Fiscal Year. We cannot measure the duration of time this process takes until a system change occurs to track end dates for legal authority changes.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION
AND
TREATMENT ACT (CAPTA)**

**APPLICATION
for
Federal Fiscal Year (FFY)
2007**

CFS-101

June 30, 2006

State of California
Department of Social Services

CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION AND TREATMENT ACT

**APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL FISCAL YEAR (FFY) 2004 FUNDING
PLAN FOR FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2005-2009**

APPLICANT AGENCY: State of California, Department of Social Services

Organizational Unit: Office of Child Abuse Prevention
744 P Street, M.S. 11-82
Sacramento, California 95814

Designated Child Abuse and Neglect State Liaison Officer with NCCAN:

Susan Nisenbaum, Chief
Child Protection and Family Support Branch
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Application Information Contact:

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Office of Child Abuse Prevention
(916) 651-6960

Applicant Agency's Employer Identification Number:

94-6001347

Introduction

The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) Plan is the primary prevention component of the state's Child and Family Services IV-B Plan, which is also referred to as the CFSP. The programs, services, and activities outlined in the CAPTA component are linked to the following goals and objectives of the entire CFSP plan:

- **Safety Outcome**

Goal 1: Children are first, and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect; they are safely maintained in their homes whenever appropriately possible and provided services to protect them.

- **Well Being Outcome**

Goal 3: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate; families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs; children, youth and families are active participants in the case planning process; and children receive adequate and appropriate services to meet their educational, physical, and mental health needs.

It is the state's intent to ensure a clear link between CAPTA and the Title IV-B Child and Family Services Plan goals by utilizing CAPTA funds to enhance community capacity to ensure the safety of children and promote the well-being of children and families. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), through its Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP), uses the CAPTA grant, in combination with other funds such as Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) and state funds from the Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment (CAPIT) Program and the State Children's Trust Fund to support counties, family resource centers, and other community based organizations through grants, contracts, and interagency agreements to promote child abuse prevention and to provide early intervention services that serve children and families within their own communities whenever possible.

When evaluating the programs that provide the services and the training that is necessary to ensure that there is the sufficient capacity to keep children safe and to enhance the well being of children and families, CDSS/OCAP reviews the activities and assesses the results associated with these specific programs. The following is a report on the CDSS/OCAP programs and activities for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2005. Discussions of future directions address FFY 2006 and FFY 2007.

Identification of Program Areas Selected for Improvement

Area 8: Developing and facilitating training protocols for individuals mandated to report child abuse and neglect.

Area 12: Developing and enhancing the capacity of community-based programs to integrate shared leadership strategies between parents and professionals to prevent and treat child abuse and neglect at the neighborhood level.

Area 14: Supporting and enhancing collaboration among public health agencies, the child protection system, and private community-based programs to provide child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment services (including linkages with education systems) and to address the health needs, including the mental health needs, of children identified as abused or neglected, including supporting prompt, comprehensive health and developmental evaluations for children who are the subject of substantiated child maltreatment reports.

Program Improvement Area 8: Programs, Activities, Services and Training

Child Abuse Training and Technical Assistance

Program Description

In accordance with sections 18961, 18963 (2), and 18978, *et. seq.* of the California State Welfare and Institutions Code, the California Department of Social Services' Office of Child Abuse Prevention (CDSS/OCAP) is required to use private, non-profit agencies to provide the training and technical assistance necessary for planning, improving, developing and carrying out programs and activities related to the prevention, identification and treatment of child abuse and neglect; to disseminate information addressing issues of child abuse among multicultural and special needs populations; and to provide assistance and funding for the coordination and strengthening of Child Abuse Prevention Councils (CAPCs). In keeping with this mandate the CDSS/OCAP and the California Office of Emergency Services (OES) have a grant with the California Institute of Human Services (CIHS) at Sonoma State University to provide these services through the Child Abuse Training and Technical Assistance (CATTa) Program. CIHS has an agreement with the California State University, Channel Islands, that link these two entities as CATTa training centers. Both the grant and the agreement were due to sunset on June 30, 2005, however both are being extended until June 30, 2007.

Objective

To provide training and technical assistance for direct service providers in the field of child abuse prevention, intervention, and treatment with an emphasis on prevention and family support services.

Activities/Results

In the period between October 1, 2004 and September 30, 2005, the CATT training centers conducted 80 workshops, including those at more than a dozen conferences. These workshops provided training to approximately 5,400 individuals. During the reporting period, CATT provided approximately 1,500 hours of technical assistance to personnel in more than 1,100 agencies.

From October 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, CATT has conducted 57 training and technical assistance events serving 4,196 professionals. These events were well received by participants; using a 5-point Likert scale where 1= poor and 5= excellent, the average rating following the events across all workshops was 4.38. Training participants during this report period included individuals from 57 of California's 58 counties, and technical assistance activities reached individuals from all 58 counties. In addition, CATT has provided nearly 900 hours of technical assistance to individuals and agencies statewide. CATT's Regional Resource Coalition Coordinators have provided an additional 600 hours of county technical assistance.

Objective

To assist local child abuse prevention councils in strengthening their local prevention communities' capacity and expertise by utilizing the eight (8) Regional Resource Consortia (RRCs) to provide training, technical assistance, and networking opportunities.

Activities/Results

During reporting period of October 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006, CIHS completed the annual statewide needs assessment of the CAPCs. The needs assessment supplied data to provide a more targeted, solution-focused delivery of technical assistance that facilitated a statewide CAPCs survey requesting feedback on needed training topics. The survey design requested training needs both at the county and region levels. The results reflected need/interest for county and regional needs would remain the same, the summary below includes only topics listed under the county section.

66.7% suggested training on CAPC operations, such as evaluation, funding, best practices, strategic planning and media campaigns. Additional suggestions included collaboration strategies, increasing involvement of parents and community in the CAPC, and a wide variety of organizational development topics.

23.4% suggested system response issues, such as CWS redesign, interview techniques, mandated reporter trainings, SCAN team models, and first responder training.

23.4% suggested specific prevention issues, such as brain development, special needs populations, Shaken Baby Syndrome, abuse across the lifespan, and the relation of animal abuse to child abuse.

21.7% suggested general prevention issues, such as parenting strategies, positive discipline, father involvement and foster care.

21.7% suggested treatment issues, such as working with children with specific needs (raised in substance-abusing households, ADHD, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and etc.)

Conclusion

The CAPC needs assessment survey provided some inspiring information regarding the CAPCs. The increase in overall strength of the councils, along with stable structure, reliable funding and improved performance, were also supported by findings from the 2005 Action Planning activity report.

CATTA provided technical assistance and support to the eleven Small County Initiative II grantees during the period from October 1, 2004 to September 2005. CATTA provided travel stipends that allowed the grantees to participate in the meetings and events of their RRCs. These stipends helped the grantees attend the first statewide conference of child abuse prevention councils that was held in April of 2005. During this conference, counties reported that they are:

- Reaching underserved populations in remote areas.
- Implementing differential response in differing degrees.
- Seeking sustainability to continue activities after the OCAP Small County Initiative grant ends in December of 2006.

CATTA retained a research and evaluation specialist who provided consultation to the grantees on program outcome measures and CATTA staff responded to requests from the grantees to conduct searches for relevant literature.

Objective

To support direct service providers in the field of child abuse prevention by developing informational materials for them and distributing relevant information from a variety of sources to them.

Activities/Results

CATTA made available over 1,650 resources on child abuse prevention to the approximately 14,000 contacts that are stored in its data base.

CATTA maintains a web site of on-line resources including:

- A quarterly newsletter (the newsletter is also distributed in hardcopy to approximately 10,000 constituents).
- An online directory of the Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention and Treatment organizations in the 58 counties of California that provide support services to children and families.
- Web pages that provide links to CAPCs; Multi-Disciplinary Interview Centers/Teams; training that is available; publications, directories and searchable data bases that are focused upon the prevention, intervention and treatment of child abuse and neglect; topics of interest to the CATTA constituency; and additional on-line resources.

CATTA developed and distributed videocassettes on topics that address the programs of CATTA constituents.

CATTA operates a toll free information and referral number that is utilized by the public and by professionals.

CATTA maintains listservs for the following groups:

- General CAPTA constituency.
- Child abuse prevention councils.
- Multi-disciplinary centers.
- Child Abuse Treatment (CHAT) Programs.
- Small County Initiative II Counties.
- Spanish-speaking child forensic interviewers.

Objective

To maintain the high quality services of the CATTA project through evaluation processes.

Activities/Results

CATTA developed and implemented the annual evaluation plan for its three program components which are training and technical assistance; development of Regional Resource Consortia, and information development and distribution.

Training is evaluated on an on-going basis as participants are asked to complete written evaluations at the conclusion of each training. Participants are asked to complete a ninety day follow-up evaluation that includes questions regarding the implementation and utilization of the training material by individuals and agencies.

The CAPC needs assessment that was completed by the CIHS and mentioned earlier was one component of the evaluation plan for the Regional Resource Consortiums.

Strategies: Family Resource Center and Family Support Program Training and Technical Assistance

Program Description

The CDSS/OCAP has developed a consortium of three regional training centers, Strategies, to enhance the quality of the programs and services provided by Family Resource Centers (FRCs) and family support programs. Evolving research indicates that FRCs offer promising approaches to address such issues as: child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, family violence, family instability, juvenile violence/crime, employment, community disintegration, family isolation, health, and educational outcomes.

The Strategies project is one aspect of the CDSS/OCAP statewide-integrated training program. The goal of Strategies, which consists of the Youth for Change/Paradise Ridge FRC in Butte County (Region 1); Interface Children and Family Services in Ventura County (Region 2); and the Children's Bureau of Southern California with offices in Los Angeles and Orange counties (Region 3); is to provide training and technical assistance to develop and support prevention-focused FRCs that offer core services (parent education, child development activities, resource and referral, drop-in availability, peer-to-peer supports, life skills, and advocacy) and comprehensive support to families.

FRCs that offer comprehensive support services provide integrated services that often include case management, home visitation, child abuse/neglect treatment, family health and wellness, family economics and self sufficiency, family literacy, substance abuse treatment, youth development, and community development activities.

In addition to providing training and technical assistance to organizations using the center-based model of FRCs, Strategies increasingly provides services to other types of family support programs that utilize prevention models and asset focused services.

The CDSS/OCAP contracts with Strategies to train professionals, paraprofessionals, volunteers and parents on in-home visitation, center-based services, team case management, non-profit management, public and private partnerships, and community leadership.

The three Strategies project sites are key partners in developing and supporting both regional and statewide networks of FRCs and family support programs. Strategies employs a variety of technical assistance techniques including onsite consultations, teleconferences, online communications, lending libraries, and in office/phone consultation. Strategies fosters statewide communication through its comprehensive website and quarterly newsletter.

The Strategies training and technical assistance project is currently funded through June 30, 2008.

Objective

To increase the capacity and expertise of FRCs and family support programs throughout California, Strategies will deliver three, three-day comprehensive FRC core trainings per year; conduct three peer review trainings per year (approximately 20 organizations will participate); implement leadership training for up to 25 organizations; conduct four teleconference series; and six capacity building events.

Activities/Results

FRC Core Trainings: Three trainings, attended by 97 people, were presented in FFY 2005. During the first half of FFY 2006, one core training was held in which 38 people participated. The FRC Core Training curriculum was also updated to reflect changes in policy and practice in the field of family support.

Peer Review: The peer review process acts as a networking tool as it facilitates a self-reflective process that nurtures trust and self-disclosure within a working partnership of FRCs. These partnerships evaluate and strengthen the approaches and services offered by the participating FRCs. Through participation in peer review, FRCs have developed an enhanced awareness of the statewide issues affecting them, while developing greater connections with other FRCs.

Three individual peer review training sessions were provided. Each full day training session was followed by a half day session to discuss the process and determine needs for follow-up. A total of 15 FRCs (38 participants from 5 counties) completed the peer review process. The benefits to participating FRCs included the knowledge gained from the self-assessment experience and the close relationships formed with their partnering FRCs.

Strategies strengthened the follow-up technical assistance portion of the peer review process by having each representative from a FRC write down a specific goal and outcome of his or her own choosing to work on. Regional project specialists provided coaching to help them achieve their goals.

In an ongoing effort to keep the peer-review training current and to provide for quality assurance, Region 3 updated the trainer's manual for both the initial training day and the half day follow-up session.

Teleconference Series: As a training tool, the teleconference series was used to connect participants from across the state to expert trainers. Designed with two tracks (FRC Fundamentals and Nonprofit Management), the teleconference series served two primary purposes: (1) to act as a training vehicle, which provides information and training to FRC staff regarding program and organizational development and (2) to act as a means of support by facilitating networking among FRCs across the state.

Given the vast geographical distances between FRCs, the teleconference series afforded urban, rural, and suburban FRCs an opportunity to communicate without the impediments of the distance, cost, and time, incurred through physical travel. In delivering the series, Region 3 identified experts and consultants in the field who were either part of an FRC or had experience training FRC staff. A new teleconference series featured during FFY 2005 pertained to FRC support staff issues and featured two components: *Getting the Most Out of Your Supervision* and *Working With Difficult Clients*. Additional topics presented included Community Development, Program Evaluation, Family Support Principles, Sustainability in FRCs, Political Engagement, Making Supervision Work, Parent Involvement, and Human Resources.

Leadership Academy: Strategies completed its three year cycle of Leadership Academies in January 2005. In a final assessment of this project, it was concluded that the facilitative leadership training impacted its participants by extending the field of family support in California and by elevating their leadership and management skills.

Capacity-Building Events: In FFY 2005, Strategies' trainings and workshops were attended by 4,772 participants. Technical assistance was provided to 162 agencies in 46 counties and group technical assistance events (such as strategic planning meetings and staff development in-services) were conducted in 24 counties with participation by 103 agencies. In the first half of FFY 2006, 738 people attended trainings and workshops and 46 agencies, in 26 counties, received technical assistance. Group technical assistance activities, in which 43 agencies participated, were held in 11 counties. Each region presented multiple local events above and beyond the FRC core training series described above. These events were in response to local requests or emerging needs. Topics covered at these events during FFY 2005 included:

- Tapestry.
- Building Multicultural Skills for Family Workers.
- Bridges Out of Poverty.
- Making Supervision Work.
- Building Parent Leadership and Community Involvement.
- Family Support Principles in Action.

- Emotional Intelligence.
- Brain on a Bagel.
- Sustainability and Grant Writing.

Topics introduced during the first half of FFY 2006 were:

- The Convergence Conference
- Integrating Elders into Family Resource Centers
- An Introduction to Family Resource Centers
- Youth Development: Enhancing Programs that Support Youth.

Future Directions

With the exception of the Leadership Academy, Strategies is expected to continue the same activities with the same expected outcomes in FFYs 2006 and 2007. The lessons learned from the Leadership Academy have been incorporated into several new projects of Strategies, including the sustainability project, the community development matrix project, high performance partnerships, and the community development training. These projects all include a team capacity building approach followed by on-site structured technical assistance.

Objective

To increase the utilization of promising practices and improve the quality of services for home visitation and family support programs, Strategies will provide 80 hours of training per year in the areas of in-home visitation, supervision, case management, and family support strategies.

Activities/Results

The case management and home visitation trainings are highly interactive two-day training sessions. The curricula were revised in FFY 2005 based on participant feedback and trainer research. The case management training was presented 8 times to a total of 313 participants and the home visiting training was presenting 3 times to a total of 130 participants. In the first half of FFY 2006, there were 4 case management trainings with 215 participants, and two home visiting trainings with 82 participants.

The locations of these trainings throughout the state show not only the challenge of serving a state as diverse as California, but Strategies' commitment to meeting that challenge. For example, the case management training was conducted as far north as Yreka and as far south as El Centro, both rural and difficult locations to reach. Other locations included Santa Cruz, Imperial, San Bernardino, Kern, Alameda, and San Luis Obispo Counties.

Future Directions

CDSS/OCAP anticipates that funding levels will remain constant and the program is expected to continue the same activities with the same expected outcomes in FFYs 2006 and 2007.

Objective

To increase networking among FRCs statewide and regionally, Strategies will provide a statewide listserv, maintain an effective web site, disseminate the “Working Strategies” newsletter, add networking activities to all training activities, and convene regional meetings for the purpose of peer-to-peer communications.

Activities/Results

Web page and listserv: In FFY 2005, a statewide listserv, known as “Strategies Announce”, included more than 1,100 subscribers and became a key resource for publicizing trainings. It is being used increasingly as a tool for staff recruitment by the FRCs. Approximately 92,677 people visited the Strategies’ website in FFY 2005 at www.familyresourcecenters.net. Many visitors entered the website through the training calendar and then registered for events. The number of subscribers to the Strategies Listserv fluctuates each year based upon the addition and deletion of subscribers. Based upon the 988 subscribers registered for the first half of the FFY 2006 (October 1, 2005 – March 31, 2006), it is projected that the total number of subscribers in FFY 2006 will surpass that of 2005.

Working Strategies Newsletter: Four newsletters were produced and disseminated during this reporting period. The newsletters were posted on the Strategies’ web site, www.familyresourcecenters.net, and distributed through the Strategies’ statewide mailing list. Website visitors can download past newsletter editions, dating back to summer 1999. Staff in the three Strategies regional offices contributes articles to the newsletter. In an effort to continue content quality and the Newsletter’s relevance to the family support field, topics were carefully chosen to address current trends and issues of concern in California and to reflect consumers’ areas of interest.

The lead articles in FFY 2005 were as follows:

Summer 2005 – “Encouraging Strong Relationships Between Fathers and Children” by Carolyn Pape Cowan, Ph.D., Philip A. Cowan, Ph.D., Marsha Kline Pruett, Ph.D., and Kyle Pruett, M.D.

Spring 2005 – “Building Blocks for the Sustainable FRC” by Katherine Armstrong and Barbara Alderson.

Winter 2004-2005 – “Poverty and Family Resource Centers: Where We Are Today” by Annette Marcus and Barbara Alderson.

Fall 2004 – “The Transformative Process of Community Development” by Dahnes Medora and Spencer Cronk.

The lead articles in the first half of 2006 were as follows:

- Fall 2005 – “Two Ends of the Rainbow: Intergenerational Family Support” lead article by Gail Koser, MSW (Mailed 10/18/05)
- Winter 2005-2006 – “Expanding the Definition of Family Net Worth” lead article by Derek Peterson (Mailed 1/20/06)
- Spring 2006 – “The Climate for Success” lead article by Joshua Freedman and Thomas Wojick (Mailed 3/3/06).

Network Development: Network development has been approached through three interlocking ways: participation, partnership, and provision.

- Participation: Strategies’ staff participates in FRC networks by first seeking out new, emerging or established networks and then becoming active network members. By attending meetings and generally contributing to network activities, Strategies staff members build essential relationships within the network and contribute to FRC development.
- Partnership: Strategies’ staff partner with networks by developing network-specific training and technical assistance plans and co-sponsoring training and other network activities.
- Provision: Strategies’ staff members provide services to networks by assisting with the development and implementation of network training plans and providing network-specific technical assistance.

Strategies also convened a variety of networking forums around the state including two in the first half of FFY 2006. For example, in Ventura County, Strategies convened quarterly meetings entitled “FRC-able Future” at which local family support organizations shared common challenges, resources, and promising practices. In Los Angeles, Project Access, a nonprofit organization that acts as an umbrella organization to eleven FRCs in low-income housing developments in southern California, agreed to participate in a network to explore the issues of emerging FRCs. As a result, a training plan was developed which will provide Project Access Center Coordinators with a series of three trainings on “Essential Elements of an FRC,” “Parent Involvement, Part 1,” and “Parent Involvement, Part 2.

Future Directions

Strategies will continue to utilize these networking approaches in FFYs 2006 and 2007 with several new initiatives to promote networking. The Family Development Matrix project, which is a partnership between the Institute for Community Collaborative Studies (ICCS) at California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) and Strategies, builds capacity to support FRCs as they partner with local child welfare systems to utilize the Family Development Matrix as a tool for:

- developing shared target outcomes for families in which family support services have been indicated as the appropriate differential response,

- facilitating usage of the outcome data to improve services to families.

Another related project, the High Performance Partnership Project, assists public and private partners to assess their “partnership readiness” and strategically plan to develop the relationships, structure, and accountability needed to make significant systemic changes. One aspect of a third project, known as the Sustainability Project, will promote increased networking among FRCs by convening six peer-to-peer learning events throughout the year.

Objective

To improve and expand the dissemination of information to isolated areas and special needs populations. Provide regional lending libraries of family support, home visiting, organizational development/practices, strategic planning and best practices materials.

Activities/Results

The most important outreach that Strategies has employed has been its ongoing relationship building that has taken place at training events, in networking meetings, through phone calls, and through site visits. The positive relationships developed through these activities have proven vital to the success of all aspects of Strategies’ service delivery.

Additionally, distance learning (teleconferences and web-conferencing) has been used to reach the diverse (urban, suburban, and rural) communities in the state, as well as those individuals unable to travel to a given site for training.

Strategies convened an outreach workgroup, which assembled an outreach packet, reviewed promotional material (i.e., brochures and the statewide training description sheet), and initiated a statewide survey. The overall purpose of the workgroup was to expand Strategies’ recruitment into isolated and geographically remote areas.

In FFY 2005, Strategies connected with the largest special needs family support network in California (Family Resource Centers Network of California–FRCNCA) in an effort to reach and serve special needs families. Strategies Region 3 developed ongoing relationships with the state network and several local and regional FRCs and networks, including the FRCNCA, San Bernardino Special Needs Network, the Exceptional FRC in San Diego, and the Lanterman Regional Center in Los Angeles.

At training events, Strategies’ staff made a particular effort to connect with people who had traveled long distances from rural and underserved counties and communities. Staff nurtured these relationships via follow up e-mails, site visits, and by taking requested training to rural locations.

Standard surface mailing of project information and training flyers continued to be an effective outreach method. The statewide mailing list was continually updated to

eliminate outdated information, thus lowering mailing costs and reducing duplication. The statewide mailing list currently has approximately 4,500 entries.

In FFY 2005, Strategies reached 810 agencies in 55 counties across California.

Future Directions

Strategies will continue to utilize these successful outreach approaches in FFYs 2006 and 2007. Additionally, Strategies will work to develop a relationship with the California Family Resource Association, a newly emerging statewide network.

Objective

To support the successful implementation of Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) through training and technical assistance. Provide training and technical assistance for three or more citizen review panels.

Activities/Results

In FFY 2005, training and technical assistance was provided to four citizen review panels located in Kern, San Mateo, Alameda and Napa counties. Technical assistance was provided through site visits, ongoing e-mail correspondences and statewide meetings. Strategies and CDSS/OCAP completed a training manual for CRPs, which is available online at www.familyresourcecenters.net.

Future Directions

In the next fiscal year and in FFY 2007, site visits will be made to each of the panels. Strategies will continue to provide technical assistance on an “as needed” basis for this project.

Objective

To provide training and technical support for the Supporting Father Involvement (SFI) study through meeting facilitation/coordination, training development, and communication.

Activities/Results

In FFY 2005, two all-project training meetings were held with the four father-involvement sites. The topics covered included project management, clinical intervention skills, case management strategies, data collection/retrieval, and engagement and retention of families.

Future Directions

In FFY 2006, CDSS/OCAP will submit a grant amendment to extend the SFI study to June of 2009. A fifth site will be added. Strategies will provide technical assistance to all sites in FFYs 2006 and 2007. There was a meeting with the primary researchers in the Supporting Father Involvement (SFI) Study in March 2006 to share preliminary data and explore lessons learned.

Mandated Reporter Training

Program Description

In response to the increasing numbers of mandated reporters requiring training, CDSS continues to focus on the availability and accessibility of mandated reporter training. Free online training is offered and in all instances, attendance, consumer profile, and consumer satisfaction data are collected for this on-line training. The mandated reporter training is offered through a grant with Sonoma State University. In FFY, 2006, it is anticipated that the grant will be extended until June 30, 2007.

Objective

To provide on-line mandated reporter training, training of trainers, and educational materials.

Activities/Results

A basic on-line training for mandated reporters was placed on the web during FFY 2003. The training was developed by subject matter experts, in cooperation with the Office of Child Abuse Prevention. The materials were developed to both enhance other forms of mandated reporter training (e.g., classroom) and/or provide stand-alone mandated reporter training to at-home and other participants. Continuing education units are provided for a minimal fee upon request. The mandated reporter online training was translated into Spanish and posted on-line in May of 2005. A specialized module focusing on children with developmental disabilities was added to the online training in June of 2005.

The number of people who received the on-line mandated reporter training in the period between October 1, 2004 and March 31, 2006 was 4,728.

Promotional materials which were developed included a mandated reporter themed bookmark. This bookmark was approved in March 2005. By June of 2005, 21,083 bookmarks have been distributed to specific groups of people throughout the state. Those receiving the bookmarks included each of California's county welfare directors and people attending workshops and trainings statewide.

Objective

To increase the capacity of the Mandated Reporter Training project to provide face-to-face trainings for mandated reporters and training of trainers. There was one face-to-face mandated reporter training between October 1, 2004 and March 31, 2006, and there were three Training of trainer's sessions for the same time period. In FFY 2007 there will be four regional face-to-face training events conducted for mandated reporter training.

Activities/Results

In FFY 2004, the Mandated Reporter Training Project staff worked with subject matter experts and key consultants to develop a one day mandated reporter training and a "training of trainers" session. Subject matter experts and key consultants represented education, the clergy, child care providers, and health care and criminal justice professionals.

A one-day training of trainers (TOT) session was developed. In FFY 2005, it was conducted at three sites in regions throughout the State which increased its accessibility to anyone interested in attending. The TOT events were presented in Sacramento (3/05), La Jolla (5/05), and Fresno (6/05). Overall, 88 participants completed these trainings. There were three TOT events held from October 1, 2004 through March 31, 2006. (Training of trainer sessions was not in the Scope of Work for the time period of July 1, 2005-June 30, 2006.)

The face-to-face mandated reporter trainings were held in Madera (3/06), Ventura (5/06), Riverside (5/06), and Redding (5/06). The training in Riverside was for Spanish speaking people.

Objective

To increase awareness of prevention activities and parenting resources to underserved populations.

Activities/Results

In FFYs 2004 and 2005, staff of the Mandated Reporter Training project developed and delivered parent outreach and awareness building events designed to engage the community in parent education and prevention activities. These types of activities are a small part of the project's responsibilities.

During FFYs 2004 and 2005, as part of the parent outreach project activities, staff of the Mandated Reporter Training project coordinated with CATTA's eight regional resource coordinators to build their awareness of parenting resources. Eight face-to-face sessions were offered throughout the State: two sessions in FFY 2004 and six sessions in FFY 2005. Approximately 281 participants attended the six sessions that were held

in FFY 2005. Eight trainings were conducted in FFY 2006. Trainings at Santa Rosa (12/05), Fresno (2/06), Sacramento (2/06), Chico (3/06), Santa Maria (3/06), Escondido (4/06), Carson (5/06), and Modesto (6/06) were conducted between October 1, 2005 and September 30, 2006. Five of the eight trainings were between October 1, 2005 and March 31, 2006.

Medically Fragile Infants

Program Description

The CDSS continues to utilize CAPTA funds for the Special Start Training Program (SSTP), which provides training to medical professionals, social workers, professionals from other disciplines, and foster and adoptive parents on assessment and developmental interventions for high-risk newborns who are discharged from intensive care nurseries. The primary objective of this program is to facilitate enhanced parent/infant interactions and promote the development and recovery of these medically fragile infants in the out of hospital environment. The core training program is called Family Infant Relationship Support Training (FIRST).

Objective

To provide a core training for foster parents, relative caregivers, social workers and other professionals, including psychologists, physical, speech and occupational therapists, public health nurses, early childhood educators, marriage and family therapists and home visitors in the assessment and planning of appropriate interventions to meet the needs of medically fragile infants.

Activities/Results

In FFY 2005, approximately 400 professionals and 60 foster parents/relative caregivers completed FIRST.

Objective

To maintain curriculum standards so that the FIRST program meets the certification standards for FIRST (Browne, et al, 1995) based on the methodology of the Newborn Individualized Development Care and Assessment Program (NIDCAP, Als, 1985).

Activities/Results

On an on-going basis, CDSS will continue to offer the eight-hour introductory workshop; the practicum workshop; twelve individual practice and mentoring sessions; the skills check; the advanced practicum; continuing education days; and the training of trainers program in a manner that meets certification requirements. Some of the project material that will be developed, revised and updated as required, includes digital video training tapes of premature infant behavior, SSTP brochures and other hard copy

material. Project staff utilizes the website to provide current resources/links regarding the condition/care of medically fragile infants. Staff also developed the booklet, "Getting to Know Your Baby" and has begun preparing a companion book for caregivers/parents with a focus on the development of self regulation competence in infants supported by caregivers.

Objective

To Increase and broaden the audience of professionals requesting training statewide in California.

Activities/Results

In FFY 2005, the program began offering training to prepare foster parents and biological parents for the transition of medically fragile infants from one caregiver to another. The training included curricula to instruct foster parents on engagement techniques with biological parents to promote individualized caregiver interactions and support foster infant care during and after the transition period.

In FFY 2005, a web-site was established displaying information about the Special Start Training Program, including the availability of dates, registration, and other applicable information. In calendar year 2006, the web-site will be expanded to include videotaped vignettes to demonstrate patterns of high-risk infant behavior that include autonomic, motor, and state behaviors.

In FFY 2002, the program began to offer FIRST that is taught by a professional trainer and a parent trainer, whose basis for peer training and support include her experiences with her infant while in the neonatal intensive care unit. In 2006 the components of this valuable training piece will become an essential part of the new booklet on the development of self-regulation competence in infants. (See above.)

In the first half of FFY 2006, 150 professionals, including nurses, teachers, and social workers attended four "Special Start" trainings. There were two "Special Start" Day 1 Introductions, "Pre to Three" training, and 1 "Day 2 Practicum."

Five workshops are scheduled for the period between April 1, 2006 and June 30, 2006. They include "Day 2 Practicum," "Day 1 Introduction," "Development of Self Regulation," and "Management of Difficult Behaviors."

Program Improvement Area 12: Programs, Activities, Services, and Training

Parent Leadership

Program Description

The Parent Leadership grant with Parents Anonymous® Inc. provides training and technical assistance to administrators and service providers at the county level to increase their awareness of the benefits of working in partnership with parent leaders. The goal of the grant is to foster a collaborative relationship in local communities where parents and professionals can work together to ensure quality services for children and families. This grant is funded through June 30, 2007.

Objective

To provide intensive training and technical assistance to designated county teams selected by CDSS/OCAP. The purpose of this intensive training is to support counties in adopting shared leadership approach as a key component in the decision making process of the county child abuse prevention system.

Activities/Results

During the period from October 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006, Parents Anonymous® Inc. provided intensive training and technical assistance to six targeted counties: Tulare, Kern, Sacramento, Tuolumne, Mariposa, and Humboldt. Parent consumers of services and representatives from Child Abuse Prevention Councils (CPACs) and other local prevention service providers within each of these six counties have received two intensive Parent Leadership/Shared Leadership trainings along with technical assistance through Parents Anonymous® Inc. In order to assist each county in developing an effective shared leadership plan, Parents Anonymous® Inc. completed an initial telephone assessment with the Child Abuse Prevention Intervention and Treatment/Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CAPIT/CBCAP) liaison and various other community prevention stakeholders to determine its training needs. The intensive training focused on: (1) the concepts and benefits of Parent Leadership and shared leadership; (2) development of organizational structures within the local community to support parent participation in policy and service delivery for the prevention of child abuse and neglect; (3) identification and development of leadership roles and opportunities for parents who are or have been consumers of service; (4) recruitment and support of parents in their leadership roles; (5) development and implementation of an ongoing plan to sustain shared leadership in the local community; and (6) development of effective partnerships between parents and agency representatives.

Objective

To strengthen and expand the California Parent Leadership Team (CPLT) that will work in partnership with Parents Anonymous® Inc. to provide training and technical assistance to the counties. The team will participate in policy and planning activities at the state level and support parents in leadership roles that strengthen their

communities. The team will consist of 18 ethnically diverse parent leaders from throughout the state.

Activities/Results

During this reporting period, eight new members were added to the CPLT after an intensive recruitment effort that targeted the CAPIT/CBCAP coordinators, the CAPCs, and community-based child abuse prevention and family strengthening organizations throughout California. These new team members were recruited from Kern, Mendocino, Alameda, Tuolumne, Sacramento, and Los Angeles Counties.

Team members are required to attend two team meetings annually and to participate in monthly conference calls. Team meetings were held in Sacramento. Meetings were held on September 25 and 26, 2005, and others on February 23 and 24, 2006. In addition to the team meetings, 16 team teleconference calls were held.

The following describes some of the activities that the team members participated in throughout the year: team members served as co-trainers with Parents Anonymous[®] Inc. staff in all shared leadership trainings in California; team members contributed written articles to all of the *Parent Leadership* Express newsletters; they were active members of local and state councils and committees including CAPCs and Child Welfare Systems Reform committees; many members took an active role in helping to identify community needs in the development of their county's application to the state for child abuse prevention funds; and they spearheaded California Parent Leadership Month activities to recognize and honor parent leaders in their own counties during the month of February; two parent leaders joined the Statewide Citizen Review Panel; nine of the team members were highlighted in their local newspaper for their leadership roles in their communities and at the state levels; all members of the team were honored by the CDSS/OCAP during a special California Parent Leadership Month event held at the Child Abuse Prevention Council Statewide Summit in Sacramento on February 2006; each team member was honored for their excellent work and leadership in partnering with their counties and the CDSS/OCAP to strengthen families throughout the state and they were each presented with a declaration from the Governor proclaiming February as Parent Leadership Month in California; and two team members were co-presenters as a plenary session on Parent Leadership at the Child Abuse Prevention Council Statewide Summit in Sacramento and five team members were presenters on a workshop panel entitled "The Power of Parent Leaders."

Objective

To provide training and technical assistance to strengthen the parent leadership efforts in the "non-targeted" counties.

Activities/Results

In addition to providing intensive support to Tulare, Kern, Sacramento, Tuolumne, Mariposa, and Humboldt counties, Parents Anonymous® Inc. and the California Parent Leadership Team (CPLT) provided outreach, training and consultation activities to other counties. Examples of their activities are:

- January 21, 2005: Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff and a member of the CPLT provided an introductory shared leadership training to the Central Region Child Abuse Prevention Council which includes 10 counties. Following this training, additional training and technical assistance was requested by four of the counties in this region.
- January 25, 2005: Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff and a member of the CPLT attended the Inland Empire/San Diego Regional Child Abuse Prevention Council meeting and provided an overview of a shared leadership approach and discussed the benefits with the Council representatives in this region. Two counties in this region requested additional training and technical assistance following the presentation.
- February 11, 2005: A shared leadership training was provided to CAPC representatives from the North Coast Regional Child Abuse Prevention Council. All four counties in this region requested follow-up technical assistance in engaging parents in leadership roles in their Child Abuse Prevention Councils.
- February 17, 2005: A shared leadership training was conducted in Calaveras County by Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff and members of the CPLT. Participants included parents, members of the CAPC, Family Resource Centers and other community-based family strengthening programs. The training focused on the development of a countywide plan for implementing Parent Leadership and shared leadership strategies. Attendees identified areas where parents could be meaningfully involved in decision-making relating to child abuse prevention programs and they developed a six-month plan to move forward with their shared leadership vision and goals.
- May 21, 2005: A shared leadership training was conducted in Spanish at a local Family Resource Center in Lompoc. Lompoc is one of the most impoverished regions within Santa Barbara County. The training goals were two fold: (1) to facilitate a discussion of how parents and staff from the Family Resource Center could work in partnership to better meet the needs of families and (2) to help parents and staff create meaningful roles for parent consumers within the Family Resource Center so that they could be active decision-makers about their service needs.
- July 25, 2005: Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff and several CPLT members made a presentation about the shared leadership approach to the 12 CAPCs in Los Angeles County at their regional meeting. Several CAPCs requested further technical assistance and training following this introductory overview.

- March 29, 2006: Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff and several CPLT members conducted a shared leadership training in Trinity County. A wide variety of public and private organizations were represented at this training including representatives from Behavioral Health Services, Head Start, Trinity County Probation, Trinity Sheriff's Office and Health and Human Services. During the discussion relating to the development of a shared leadership plan, the participants explored the idea of working together to fund a Parent Coordinator position for the county. The proposed Coordinator would take the lead role for recruiting, training and linking Parent Leaders to various organizations. They discussed the idea of having different organizations contribute a sum of money into a pool that would help to support the parent leaders in carrying out their roles and responsibilities in the local community.

In addition to the trainings and technical assistance provided to the above counties, Parents Anonymous® Inc. was successful in increasing coordination and communication with the CATTa staff. Parents Anonymous® Inc. is now listed on the CATTa Web site as a resource on Parent Leadership and shared leadership training and technical assistance. Several articles on Parent Leadership appeared in CATTa's newsletters. Additionally, Parents Anonymous® Inc. provided an extremely successful workshop on engaging parents and the community in the vital work of Child Abuse Prevention Councils at their Statewide Conference of the Councils on April 7, 2005.

In September 2005, joint planning began between Parents Anonymous® Inc., CDSS/OCAP and CATTa to plan the Statewide Summit of the Child Abuse Prevention Councils scheduled for February 2006. Planning focused on organizing a recognition event to honor parent leaders from the CPLT at the summit and to develop several workshops on the shared leadership approach. Parents Anonymous® Inc., staff held a series of planning teleconference calls with representatives from CDSS/OCAP, CATTa, and members from the CPLT from October 2005 through January 2006. The Statewide Summit was held on February 24, 2006 and proved to be a highly successful event. Parent Leadership was an important theme all throughout the Summit. Mary Ault, Deputy Director, CDSS, provided opening remarks and stated that the CDSS/OCAP is committed to its ongoing work with Parents Anonymous® Inc. to strengthen families and prevent child abuse through effective implementation of parent leadership strategies throughout the state. She presented Dr. Lisa Pion-Berlin, President and Chief Executive Officer, Parents Anonymous® Inc., with a declaration from Governor Schwarzenegger, proclaiming February as Parent Leadership Month in California. She also presented each CPLT member with a copy of the Governor's declaration. As a result of the event, many California counties contacted Parents Anonymous® Inc. requesting parent leadership, shared leadership training and technical assistance.

In addition, Parents Anonymous® Inc. participated in a face-to-face Training and Technical Assistance Grantees' Meeting sponsored by CDSS/OCAP on January 12, 2006 in Sacramento. The purpose of this meeting was to promote collaboration and cooperation among the California Child Abuse Training and Technical Assistance (CATTa), STRATEGIES and Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff in order to optimize the

delivery of training and technical assistance throughout the state. At this meeting, all three grantees shared information about their services. This meeting helped to identify training and technical assistance service delivery gaps and areas of overlap. It was also very helpful in providing Parents Anonymous® Inc. staff an opportunity to network with other grantees. Following this Grantees' Meeting, Parents Anonymous® Inc staff invited Diane Nissen, CATTA, Director of Projects, to come to the February California Parent Leadership Team Meeting to share information about CATTA and talk about ways to coordinate efforts.

Objective

To produce and disseminate issues of the "Parent Leadership Express" newsletter that will highlight strategies and successes relating to Parent Leadership and the shared leadership method.

Activities/Results

Between October 2004 and March 31, 2006, Parents Anonymous® Inc. produced and disseminated three newsletters in collaboration with the CPLT. The "Parent Leadership Express" newsletters were distributed in February 2005, June 2005, and December 2005. These newsletters were disseminated to CAPIT/CBCAP liaisons, CAPCs, Northern and Southern offices of CATTA, community-based prevention organization representatives, and other key stakeholders in the prevention field throughout California.

Objective

To continue the comprehensive longitudinal evaluation and documentation of county level changes, successes, and barriers in implementing parent leadership and shared leadership strategies.

Activities/Results

Evaluation tools were used by the research staff of Parents Anonymous® Inc. to gather information about California county changes, successes and barriers in implementing parent leadership/shared leadership strategies, and in assessing changes in attitudes and behaviors regarding Parent Leadership and the shared leadership approach. The evaluation tools included a standard training evaluation form, separate Parent Leadership assessment tools for administrators/staff and parents, and the Parent Leadership inventory.

Evaluation data was gathered from administrators, staff, and parents who attended Parent Leadership/Shared Leadership trainings in Tulare, Kern, Sacramento, Tuolumne, Mariposa, and Humboldt counties. In addition, evaluation data was gathered from the CPLT.

On April 25, 2005, Parents Anonymous® Inc. research staff held a special teleconference call with various counties to gather additional evaluation information. This approach provided a valuable forum for representatives from CAPCs, agencies, and parents to engage in discussions across counties. The findings from the teleconference call provided another perspective to the evaluation data emphasizing the value of verbal feedback and discussion.

Overall evaluation data continues to show increasing positive attitudes and activities using parent leadership. Many counties are now eager to expand opportunities for parents who have been consumers of services to take on leadership roles and partner with them to strengthen child abuse prevention services within their local communities. Evaluation results from the CPLT showed increased leadership ability and an expansion of their leadership roles in their local communities. Evaluation results from the CPLT showed increased leadership ability and an expansion of their leadership roles in their local communities and at the state level. More and more, the CPLT members are serving as role models to other parents throughout the state and encouraging them to take on leadership roles within their local Child Abuse Prevention Councils and other family strengthening organization in their communities.

Evaluation results from the CPLT showed increased leadership ability and an expansion of their leadership roles in their local communities and at the state level.

Program Area 14: Programs, Activities, Services and Training

Small County Initiative II

Program Description

The Small County Initiative II (SCI II) builds upon the successes of the initial Small County Initiative. It is targeted toward small counties (population 70,000 or less) and provides additional funding and resources to support and strengthen the child abuse prevention systems of these counties. In addition to the CWS agency, child abuse prevention systems may include agencies such as public health, mental health, substance abuse services, law enforcement, schools, regional centers, and private nonprofit agencies that provide family support services.

The core objective of the program is to support positive systemic change that increases county capacity for the delivery of child abuse prevention services. Limited fiscal resources, personnel, and supportive services make it difficult for some small counties to compete for funding and to participate in service initiatives that are likely to require matching funds, sufficient quantities of highly qualified professional staff, and extensive supportive services.

Eleven counties (Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Del Norte, Glenn, Plumas, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity, Tuolumne, Yuba) were selected to participate in the initiative based on

a competitive process. Each participating county organization developed a scope of work specific to the status and needs of its county. The University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) has been contracted to provide the evaluation of the SCI II.

Objective

To provide training and technical assistance to county level organizations through various CDSS/OCAP funded projects (CATTa, Strategies, and the Breakthrough Series Collaborative).

Activities/Results

Technical assistance has been provided to SCI II counties through CATTa. During FFY 2005, over 150 hours of assistance was provided in response to requests from the counties. Activities included the maintenance of the SCI II listserv and the distribution of pertinent messages; face-to-face strategic planning sessions; travel stipends to support SCI II grantees' participation in their Regional Resource Consortium meetings and the annual Child Abuse Prevention Council Summit; consultation services on outcome measures with an evaluation specialist; research and distribution of professional materials; and responses to individualized training requests.

Objective

To support the development of networking among the participating counties through scheduled meetings, teleconferences, and web based communications with CDSS/OCAP, UCLA and county level organizations.

Activities/Results

Since one of the objectives of the SCI II is to strengthen the child abuse prevention systems in the participating counties, SCI II and other California counties were encouraged to attend the Child Abuse Prevention Month "Event at the Capitol" and the first statewide Child Abuse Prevention Council Summit in April of 2005. Nineteen SCI II representatives participated in these two events and were provided with stipends to support their travel and per diem costs. These events provided an opportunity to connect with staff from the counties, the state, FRCs and other community based organizations. Workshop sessions at the Summit included "CAPC Best Practices," "Utilization of Your Board," "CWS Systems Improvements," "Funding CAPCs," and "Engaging Parents."

The Statewide Child Abuse Prevention Council Summit is scheduled for February 24, 2006 in Sacramento. CATTa has been planning collaboratively with several other agencies to conduct this event. Parents Anonymous® will be providing a plenary session and breakout workshops on Parent Leadership month. The Summit will also host the Parent Leadership Month Proclamation and Parent Leaders Awards Ceremony. Additional plenary and breakout workshops will highlight the statewide

CAPC for Deaf Children and the CAPC for Children and People with Disabilities. CATTa is offering stipends to support the travel and registration fees of participating CAPC members, particularly SCI II and rural county participants.

CATTa has also done extensive planning and coordination for the two-day SCI II grantees meeting on March 22-23, 2006. An agenda has been developed in collaboration with OCAP and UCLA, and panel presenters have been identified.

Small County Initiative II Evaluation

Program Description

CDSS/OCAP has a contract with UCLA to design and conduct an evaluation that will generate data that can be used by CDSS and the counties participating in the SCI II. The evaluation will be used to identify successes and the barriers to achieving the goals and objectives identified in each county's scope of work. The program in each county is focused upon strengthening its child abuse prevention system.

Objective

To collect data to evaluate the SCI II by coordinating evaluation design and data needs with UCLA and the participating counties.

Activities/Results

During FFY 2005, UCLA utilized the Prevention System Assessment tool to establish baseline data on the child abuse prevention system in each county. The instrument focuses on: Community Capacity Development; Differential Response and Service Availability to Vulnerable Families; Treatment and Specialized Services for Vulnerable Families; and Organizational Culture Change.

It is anticipated that UCLA will submit a final evaluation report to CDSS/OCAP by June 2007.

Objective

To determine to what extent, each SCI II county has successfully implemented the program development objectives specified in its plan.

Activities/Results

A quarterly report survey instrument has been developed and given to counties so they can highlight their activities that address their unique program objectives. This qualitative information will be analyzed during the evaluation process.

Objective

To evaluate, at the local level, the success of the SCI II initiative to build service capacity, outreach to underserved populations, and to support implementation of a differential response system.

Activities/Results

In the first six months of FFY 2005, the UCLA evaluators began collecting data on the client services programs at the county level. They developed a site visit protocol, and began site visits to the SCI II counties to interview program directors, direct care staff, CAPC staff, and CPS representatives. The site visits focus upon specific programs that are being developed and enhanced through SCI II and address issues such as system governance, integration of prevention with CPS, differential response, community involvement, outreach to populations in need, and promising prevention service models for these rural communities.

Prevention Advisory Council

Program Description

The Prevention Advisory Council (PAC) was created pursuant to the federal Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention program requirements. The PAC acted in an advisory capacity to CDSS/OCAP. The focus of the PAC was on the development and expansion of family resource and family support collaboratives and networks that are comprised of community-based, county and state level organizations, and agencies serving children and families.

In keeping with the Stakeholders' recommendation that prevention be incorporated into all aspects of the Child Welfare Services System, the statewide Citizen Review Panel will now provide the function that was provided previously by the PAC. This holistic approach fulfills the Stakeholder finding that prevention must be the foundation of Child Welfare Services System Improvement and not a separate or stand alone activity. This will also meet the requirements of the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program, by providing input to the CDSS on community-based, prevention-focused family resource and support programs. The focus of the PAC has been on the development and expansion of family resource and family support collaboratives and networks comprised of community-based, county and state level organizations, and agencies service children and families. In its advisory role, the statewide CRP will integrate a primary prevention and early intervention perspective into its review of statewide CWS policies, practices and procedures

Evidenced-based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare Services in California

Program Description

As part of the California statewide CWS system improvement activities to transform how child welfare services are practiced in California, CDSS/OCAP conducted a competitive process to develop, implement, and maintain an Evidence-based Clearinghouse for child welfare practice. Children's Hospital, San Diego was awarded the grant on January 1, 2004. The grant will end on June 30, 2007.

Development of the Clearinghouse, in the form of a website, is being accomplished through a participatory process involving an advisory group and a scientific panel responsible for identifying and rating the varied programs by means of evidence-based practices.

Information to be presented on the website is designed to assist in improving outcomes for children and families in child welfare. It is projected to be a useful resource for policy makers, agency directors, managers, supervisors, and practitioners in public child welfare and community based organizations. Information on evidence-based practices in the fields of public health, mental health, substance abuse treatment, and developmental services is included on the website.

Objective

Convene an advisory committee to guide the work of establishing and maintaining the Clearinghouse.

Activities/Results

The sixteen member advisory committee, which was selected in 2004, includes researchers, child welfare services practitioners, as well as representatives from the County Welfare Directors Association, the CDSS Systems Improvement project, community agencies, and foundations. The advisory committee meets in person in Sacramento twice a year and via teleconference twice each year.

Objective

Develop formal criteria for selection of practices as evidence-based and review a wide variety of sources to identify practices meeting the criteria.

Activities/Results

The Clearinghouse uses a standardized process to identify and review child welfare programs and practices for inclusion on the website. The statewide advisory committee selects an average of 10-12 topical areas per year. The Clearinghouse staff works closely with the scientific panel to identify the need for additional topical area expertise, which will be provided by leading child welfare authorities. Working with the scientific panel and topical experts, the Clearinghouse staff elicits "nominations" for inclusion in

the Clearinghouse. These generally involve 5 to 15 discreet programs or models selected that fit one of the following criteria:

- Have strong empirical support for their efficacy.
- Are in common use in California.
- Are being marketed in California.

The advisory committee selects five to ten of the most compelling programs and models that can be effectively reviewed and rated for the list of programs and models nominated.

The Clearinghouse staff work with the topical expert and also directly with the developer of the program or model to identify all relevant literature on each individual model. The Clearinghouse staff review all peer reviewed research literature on the models along with a sample of proprietary and other relevant peer reviewed clinical literature. The information from the reviews and the developers are synthesized to create the topical outline contained on this website. The Clearinghouse grant staff and topical experts review the research and science supporting the model and “rate” the model based on the strength of the evidence supporting it utilizing a scientific rating scale. They determine the research and particular model’s relevance to child welfare outcomes based on the three fundamental goals: safety, permanency, and well-being.

Objective

To design a conceptual framework for an interactive web-based application of the Clearinghouse that supports access to and implementation of evidence-based practices in the field of social work.

Activities/Results

The initial design and technical requirements for the website have been completed, and the website became operational in the spring of 2006. The website may be found at: <http://www.cachildwelfareclearinghouse.org/>

Safely Surrendered Babies

Program Description

This program publicizes a state law, which allows a distressed parent, who is either unable or unwilling to care for a child, to legally, confidentially, and safely surrender her or his baby in a hospital emergency room or other designated location within three days of birth.

Objective

To develop and disseminate materials that will inform the general public about the state law and how to safely surrender baby.

Activities/Results

During this reporting period, the CDSS has been revising the informational materials to be used for a new public education and outreach campaign for Safely Surrendered Babies (SSB), which will be launched in May 2006. The SSB information is being updated with new graphics for the brochures and posters. The publications are available in Spanish and CDSS/OCAP is exploring the feasibility of translating the materials into other languages.

CDSS/OCAP is exploring the feasibility of establishing a statewide toll-free phone number and having this number printed on the informational materials. This line would be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and have operators who speak a variety of languages. Information could be provided about various options available, including adoption and safe surrender of the newborn.

Parent Outreach Project

Program Description

Currently, CDSS/OCAP funds a grant program to plan, develop, implement, and evaluate a multi-year child abuse prevention outreach campaign through the Institute for Human Services at California State University, Sonoma. This campaign is designed to: (1) build public awareness of parenting resources and (2) build and strengthen the capacity of local communities to conduct prevention activities that include media outreach and other public relations activities.

Objective

To promote public awareness of parenting resources and strengthen the capacity of local communities to conduct prevention activities.

Activities/Results

In FFY 2005, project staff:

- Identified eight regional resource coordinators throughout the state that had strong prevention leadership experience and a strong desire to promote prevention and build awareness about parenting resources and good parenting skills through the Parent Outreach Project.

- Developed and delivered Parent Outreach events throughout California to engage in parent education and prevention awareness building activities. There were over 281 participants throughout California.
- Maintained a resource table at the events and provided participants with Parent Outreach materials.
- Maintained and updated the comprehensive, statewide, online, searchable directory of parenting resources. As of June 30, 2004, this database had over 10,000 records. Directory resources are continually researched and updated.
- Provided information and referral (I&R) services via a toll free phone number that offered information about local resources for parents. This service received approximately 384 calls during this time period. Training was provided to the regional resource coordinators regarding the I&R service that supports callers in using the statewide online resource directory.
- Developed resource display tables at conferences throughout the state announcing the toll free I&R phone number and online parenting resource directory.
- Developed materials to promote the toll free phone number and website address. Approximately 130,500 promotional materials were distributed.

Future Directions

In the first six months of FFY 2006 Project Staff will:

- Monitor the activities of the eight regional resource coordinators who conduct parent outreach activities.
- Develop and deliver eight Parent Outreach events to engage the community in parent education and prevention awareness building activities. It is estimated that 50-100 people will attend each event.
- Continue to verify and update the statewide database of parenting resources.
- Continue to provide information and referral (I&R) services via a toll free phone number that offers information about local resources for parents.
- Continue to provide training for the regional resource coordinators regarding the I&R service that supports callers in using the statewide online resource directory. It is estimated that the level of calls will increase from the prior time period with the increase of outreach activities.
- Provide resource displays at various conferences.
- Continue to verify and update the database.

During the last six months of FFY 2006 the project will:

- Continue to verify and update the database.
- Contract with I&R services to respond to callers will be continued.

- Provide training and outreach activities to promote the toll free number and website will be conducted.

The project will continue the existing activities in FFY 2007 until the grant ends on June 30, 2007.

Supporting Father Involvement Study

Program Description

During SFY02-03, CDSS/OCAP designed, developed, and implemented a five site study of an intervention intended to improve the quality and level of positive father involvement in at-risk families. The intervention is being implemented in Santa Cruz, San Luis Obispo, Tulare, and Yuba Counties. Grantees are the CWS agencies in these counties, which are required to partner with a local family resource center for implementation.

Initially, Sacramento County participated in the study as the fifth site. The county site experienced difficulty identifying and engaging target population families, and it was decided that the intervention was not a good fit for the identified community. The CDSS/OCAP and Sacramento County mutually reached an agreement that allowed the County to end its participation in the study and to provide alternate services to fathers who reside in the neighborhood of the FRC.

The CDSS/OCAP entered into an Interagency Agreement with the University of California, Berkeley to conduct a study to (1) determine the effectiveness of a particular intervention to increase positive father involvement and (2) measure organizational culture change to determine whether the family resource center implementing the intervention becomes more inclusive of fathers in other programs and services.

The target population is co-parenting couples with children age seven and younger. Families are randomly assigned into one of three groups: (1) a one time educational presentation about how positive father involvement improves outcomes for children; (2) a 16 week (2 hours per week) group meeting for fathers; and, (3) a 16 week group for couples (2 hours per week). All project participants receive case management services. Data will be collected through a battery of assessments that will be administered three times during each family's participation in the study. It is anticipated that an interim report will be issued in spring 2007 and a final report in 2009.

Objective

To complete a qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the SFI study.

Activities/Results

The principal investigators were retained through contracts with the Connecticut Department of Mental Health (to retain investigators from Yale University Medical

School) and with UC Berkeley. Project meetings, to provide face-to-face training and technical assistance to staff of the five sites, were held in April, and November of 2005; and, are tentatively scheduled for May and November 2006. A project listserv that facilitates communication, training, and technical assistance was launched in 2004 and continues to provide continuity in communication between sites, the research team and CDSS. All clinical study sites (four family resource centers) have enrolled families into the study and are providing intervention services. Approximately 300 families will participate in the study.

The design of the SFI study for low-income families involves random assignment to (1) a single-session information session (the control group), (2) a 16-week fathers-only group, or (3) a 16-week couples group. The same staff pairs (each pair comprised of a male and female) conduct interventions with all study participants. The first half of the expected 300 participants has completed a pre-intervention assessment and a post-intervention assessment three months after the groups end. The early results reveal no change in fathers' involvement in daily tasks of child care for control group parents, based on mothers' and fathers' reports. Fathers from the fathers-only groups report more involvement, but their partners' reports (the mothers) do not reflect a change in the men's involvement. By contrast, both fathers and mothers who participated in a 16-week couples group report that fathers do more of the hands-on tasks of rearing their youngest child than they had 9 months earlier. The couples group also has an impact on maintaining both mothers' and fathers' satisfaction with the relationship as a couple, whereas the control participants show a more typical decline in relationship satisfaction over the same period of time. Finally, the couples' group participants describe their children in less symptomatic and more positive ways than they had 9 months earlier—more positively than the fathers group and control group participants describe their children.

In short, the results, especially for the groups in which both mothers and fathers participate, appear promising—in terms of fostering increased father involvement in their young children's care and parents' satisfaction with their relationships as couples. There is some indication from the group leaders' observations that participation in the fathers-only groups may yield positive results in the longer term. We will be conducting a second post-intervention assessment 18 months after participants enter the study to follow these early trends further.

Objective

To proceed as planned with San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, Tulare, and Yuba Counties.

Activities/Results

CDSS is in the process of expanding the study to new target populations within the current four sites. By July 2006, a dissemination plan will be developed for the purpose of providing practice information to other counties within California.

Objective

Develop and deliver an effective training and technical assistance program to the four implementing sites.

Activities/Results

During SFY05-06, CDSS/OCAP continued to provide training and technical assistance to the four sites that are implementing the SFI study. Twice a year, all project staff and the county liaison from each site are convened for training that focuses on:

- Model fidelity.
- Data collection and reporting.
- Project oversight and sustainability development.
- Clinical skills/group intervention approaches.
- Case management strategies.

The research team, comprised of Carolyn Cowan, Ph.D., Phil Cowan, Ph.D., and Mitra Rahnema, Data Manager, is from UC Berkeley. Kyle Pruett, M.D. and Marsha Kline Pruett, Ph.D., of Yale University, provided the training. In addition, monthly clinical consultations are provided via conference calls for key staff from each site and site visits are conducted as necessary to provide additional technical assistance.

A listserv is maintained by Strategies to provide ongoing communication between the sites, the research team, data manager, and CDSS/OCAP staff as well as facilitate peer support for the four SFI study sites.

Future Directions

In SFY 05-06, CDSS/OCAP will process grant amendments to extend the SFI study until June of 2009. A fifth county will be added to the study and the methodology will be tested with other populations.

Citizen Review Panels

Program Description

The function of CRPs is to evaluate the effectiveness with which State and local child protection agencies are discharging their responsibilities. Evaluation involves examining child protection policies, practices, and procedures. Recommendations are then made to County and State governments for improvement.

CRPs bring together citizens, former consumers of services, foster parents, child welfare services professionals, court-appointed special advocates, children's attorney's, educators, representatives of tribal governments, representatives of county public

health and mental health agencies, law enforcement officials, and others to review these policies, practices, and procedures.

Objective

To implement a new statewide panel by October 1, 2004 to examine the policies practices and procedures of the statewide CWS agency.

Activities/Results

Twenty-two panel members were selected by October of 2004. The membership draws from child advocates, parent leaders, tribal leaders, foundation officers, county mental health managers, law enforcement, county counsels, alcohol and drug program administrators, foster parents, foster youth, social workers, probation officers, and the Judicial Council. In November of 2004, CDSS/OCAP staff conducted two introductory conference calls (to include all panel members and accommodate their schedules) that oriented the new panel to its duties and responsibilities. The arrival of a new director in December of 2004 and the subsequent transition period meant that plans for a January 2005 meeting were postponed. However, in FFY 2005, the panel met three times: on April 12, 2005, June 27, 2005, and September 19, 2005. Three meetings were scheduled for FFY 2006: December 12, 2005, March 20, 2006, and May 15, 2006. The fourth meeting for FFY 2006 will be scheduled at a later date.

The panel reviewed, provided information and commented upon the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR), which updates the Title IV-B Child and Family Services plan. The APSR was submitted to Region IX of the Administration for Children and Families in June of 2006.

Panel members expressed interest in evaluating issues pertaining to child safety, the equalization of services, and social worker training.

CDSS staff provided ongoing technical assistance by attending meetings of the Statewide CRP to address questions and provide requested information. State staff also provided training presentations to orient members to the purpose and responsibilities of citizen review panels. During this reporting period (FFY 2005), the Statewide CRP requested and received information on: CWS Systems and Practice Improvements; AB 636 (Outcomes and Accountability Act); Comprehensive Safety Assessment; Permanency and Youth Transitions; Differential Response; and, the California IV-B Plan for 2005-2009. Additionally, CDSS arranged for presentations and extensive handouts on maltreatment data; UC Berkeley Center for Social Services Research data; standardized safety assessment systems in California; how to access outcomes and accountability information on the web; and the central functions of CDSS Community Care Licensing Division/criminal record clearances and child abuse investigations. The focus of activities for the first year of the panel was to 1) develop membership and governance/panel structure; 2) build their knowledge base and identify sources for information; 3) review, provide information and comment on the APSR; 4) prepare to

review local panel recommendations in December of 2005; and 5) begin to determine ways to further improve communications between CDSS and counties.

Objective

To maintain at least three citizen-review panels operating in the state each year.

Activities /Results

A new funding cycle began for the county citizen review panels on October 1, 2004. Alameda, Kern, Napa and San Mateo Counties were funded. With the addition of the statewide panel, this brings the number of citizen review panels in California to five.

Objective

To provide general information to the public on the citizen review panels and to allow for public input.

Activities/Results

During the reporting period, the CDSS/OCAP and Strategies completed a CRP resource manual, which is designed to assist local panels with their organizational development, training of panel members, and review activities. This manual was posted to the Strategies website (familyresourcecenters.net) in October of 2005.

Napa and Kern Counties presented findings and or recommendations to their respective boards of supervisors at meetings that were open to the public. Kern County prepared a press release, which described its annual report and its recommendations in general terms. This press release was distributed to the local media. Napa County has posted its latest report on the national CRP website. San Mateo County has a description of the CRP and contact information on its county website.

Objective

To enhance training opportunities available to panel members.

Activities/Results

A new training and technical assistance consultant was hired at the beginning of the new funding cycle. To facilitate understanding, of the changing focus of the child welfare system in California, the consultant was required to have a background in child welfare service system improvement. Ms. Louanne Shahandeh provided consultation to panels through site visits, conference calls and e-mails and assisted in drafting and organizing the CRP Resource Manual for California's counties.

Objective

To integrate county CRP panels into a statewide Child Welfare Services advisory structure.

Activities/Results

The recommendations from the three county panels to the state and/or their respective counties, will be reviewed by the state panel, by CDSS staff, and by the local CWS agency. The state panel will send its comments on the county recommendations to CDSS staff for their consideration in responding to the county panels. CDSS will utilize its own review and the feedback from the state panel to determine whether programmatic, policy, or legislative changes are needed in the Statewide CWS program.

Objective

To maintain compliance with all federal requirements regarding citizen review panels.

Activities/Results

All county panels submitted annual reports and three panels made recommendations to state and/or local government. The county level citizen review panels submitted their annual reports on November 1, 2005. The state panel made its recommendations to the CDSS. The CDSS responded to the recommendations made by San Mateo and Napa Counties by May 1, 2006. The response to Kern County was delayed due to the number of recommendations submitted, and was sent on July 5, 2006. In total, Kern CRP submitted 113 recommendations. To ensure a thorough review, the Child and Youth Permanency Branch, the CWS/CMS Support Branch, the Legal Division and the Child Protection and Family Support Branch reviewed and provided input to the response to the recommendations submitted by Kern County's CRP.

Three of the county panels conducted a review process and the state panel reviewed CDSS policies and practices.

Individual counties received public input in a variety of ways:

- Napa County has relied on focus groups.
- San Mateo County received public input through the Children's Collaborative Action Team (CCAT) and its subcommittee, the Family and Community Advisory Committee.
- Kern County interacted with the public through presentations to the Bakersfield Police Department and the governing board of the Kern County Network for Children. It also presented its recommendations and findings at a public meeting of the County Board of Supervisors and made a summary of its annual report and recommendations available to the local media.

County CRPs have expressed interest in receiving direction from the federal government in terms of appropriate practices, policies, and procedures with regard to public input. Technical assistance was requested from the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services.

Future Directions

In FFY 2006, CDSS/OCAP will utilize an "All County Information Notice" to issue a request for applications to operate a county CRP in the new funding cycle. This cycle begins on October 1, 2006 and ends on September 30, 2008. As a result of requests made by the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA), priority will be given to counties that have not been funded before. Three counties will be selected. Should one or more new counties be selected to receive funding, staff and the technical assistance consultant will spend time orienting and training any new panels in FFY 2007. The objective of this training will be to orient new panels to their responsibilities under CAPTA and to provide the means for the panels to meet those responsibilities.

How California Meets the Provisions of Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxii)

As part of the reauthorization language for CAPTA, each state must describe the provisions and procedures they have in place for criminal background checks for prospective foster and adoptive parents and other adult relatives and non-relative residing in the household in accord with Section 106(b)(2)(A)(xxii).

California statute, as found in Welfare and Institutions Code (W&IC) Section 361.4 (b) and 361.4(c), provides that whenever a child may be placed in the home of a relative, or the home of any prospective guardian or other person who is not a licensed or certified foster parent, a state and federal level criminal records check shall be conducted. The check shall be conducted on anyone in the household who is 18 years of age or older. Within five days of the criminal records check, a fingerprint check is initiated through the California Department of Justice (DOJ) to ensure the accuracy of the criminal records check. DOJ shall forward the fingerprint check to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. A check of the Child Abuse Index shall also be done. W&IC Section 361.4(d)(1) provides that if the person has no criminal history, the home may be considered for placement.

**Budget for Federal Fiscal Year
2005 and 2006 Basic State Grants**

Activities	FFY 2005 (Actual)	FFY 2006 (Estimate)	Total
Projects (90 percent)	\$3,031,029	\$2,786,103	\$5,817,132
Administrative Costs* (10 percent)	\$336,781	\$309,566	\$646,347
Totals	\$3,367,810	\$3,095,669	\$6,463,479

* Administrative costs include:

Staff	\$293,000	\$269,323	\$562,323
Travel	\$43,782	\$40,243	\$84,025

Child Fatality Analysis

Introduction

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS), Children's Services Operations Bureau (CSOB) coordinates case reviews of child fatalities suspected of resulting from child abuse or neglect and which have prior or current involvement with the child welfare services agency. The CDSS completes Child Fatality Reviews in coordination with county child welfare service departments and evaluates the findings to ensure regulatory compliance and to identify trends and/or deficiencies in the administration of child welfare services. The child death data collected from these reviews is used to propose, develop and facilitate child welfare policy and practice oriented towards the prevention of child fatalities.

The CDSS has completed analysis of 151 child fatality cases for March 2005 through February 2006. This analysis is focused on the 151 cases reported to and reviewed by CDSS and does not reflect the entirety of child fatalities in California. The number of child fatalities reported to CSOB has increased over the last year due to counties expanding the scope of their reporting to include cases where abuse and neglect are not suspected in the cause of death. Examples of expanded county reporting include child deaths resulting from medical complications, victims of shootings, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and premature births.

Cause of Death and Findings

The 151 child fatalities reviewed and categorized by the CSOB according to the cause of death as reported by the county. These categories were:

- 21 (14%) Accidental (vehicular accidents, drowning, fire, and choking).
- 1 (.006%) Confirmed Abuse (non-accidental head injury).
- 39 (26%) Suspected Abuse (suspected physical abuse or severe neglect).
- 34 (22%) Natural Causes (illness or medically fragile conditions).
- 3 (1%) Suicide (death by one's own actions).
- 41 (27%) Homicide (result of a fatally inflicted wound or injury).
- 11 (7%) Undetermined (cause of death is unknown).
- 1 (.006%) Other (child shot committing a burglary).

The CSOB also determines what involvement, if any, the child had with the child welfare or probation agency at the time of the child's death. This provides important information in determining where, along the spectrum of the child welfare services delivery system, programmatic or policy change should occur. The 151 child fatalities broke down into the following areas:

- 9 (6%) In-home with an open child welfare case or referral.
- 16 (11%) Placed out of home with an open case or referral.
- 110 (73%) Not a current child welfare client but had a history or prior referrals/cases.
- 16 (11%) No prior or current child welfare history.

Further analysis of these cases determined that 55 percent (89) of the children who died in 2005 were under the age of three. Of these 89 fatalities, 67 were children aged one year or younger, or 44 percent of the 151 cases.

Children who Remained in the Home:

- In 9 of the 151 child death cases, child resided in the home. Of the 9, 6 of the deaths were related to the child's medically fragile condition or preliminary results indicate SIDS. One of the deaths was a result of vehicular accident and two were suspected abuse.

Children in Out-of-Home Care:

- Children placed in foster care accounted for 16 of the 151 child death cases. Of the 16, one was accidental, 5 causes of death were suspected abuse, 7 causes of death were natural causes, 3 causes of death were homicide, and 1 cause of death was undetermined.
- The CSOB also reviews for compliance with child welfare services regulations. In the course of this review, it was determined that in 3 of the 16 foster care cases, scheduled visits were not always completed in a timely manner, although this did not have a bearing on the child's death. In 1 of the 16 foster care cases, the child was placed in a relative's home prior to the home's meeting all of the relative home approval standards. However, the home was approved prior to the time of death.

Overall Finding

The CDSS continues to use information from child deaths as one factor in determining the need for changes so as to reduce child abuse related deaths and improve child safety through prevention and program oversight. The primary method used by CSOB is a case-by-case review to determine county adherence to the regulatory protections that have been established and are required to be documented in the case record. The CSOB analysis of the 151 deaths did not identify any trends that indicate a lack of compliance with state regulations

governing the administration of child welfare programs that would require systemic changes in program regulations or administration.

Current Programmatic Efforts to Identify and Prevent Child Fatalities

Broad Based Systemic Changes

California's CWS program direction has shifted in recent years due to the Federal Child and Family Services Review (2002), Child Welfare Services (CWS) Redesign activities(2000- 2004) and implementation of the new CWS Outcomes and Accountability System (2004). The current emphasis promotes positive outcomes for children and families in the core areas of safety, permanency and well-being. Underlying these broad directional programmatic changes is the need to continually improve outcomes at the county level through improved programs and practices that better serve children and families.

Primarily as a result of the California initiated CWS Redesign and the Child Welfare Services Outcomes and Accountability System, the state implemented the Child Welfare Service Improvement pilots in 11 counties. The development work occurred in SFY 04-05, and the 11 counties have been testing and evaluating the systems during SFY 05-06. These Child Welfare Services Improvements, which impact both system and practice, are keys to the ongoing effort to improve statewide program outcomes for children and families including the prevention of child fatalities.

Beginning at the Child Welfare Services (CWS) Hotline, the new Differential Response intake system provides a more customized response to families through case planning and development, and provides enhanced services to support the specific needs of children and families. The Standardized Safety Assessment System establishes the standards, tools, and practice application to improve California's safety outcomes. Permanency and Youth Services are aimed at increasing permanence and stability for children in the CWS system as well as supporting foster youth as they transition to adulthood. These programmatic changes will ensure that children who remain with their parents or who are placed in foster care are provided with safe and stable homes.

Pursuant to state law Assembly Bill (AB) 636, (Steinberg, Statutes of 2001), effective January 2004, a new Child Welfare Services Outcome and Accountability System began operation in California. The new system, referred to as the California-Child and Family Services Review (C-CFSR), was developed in accordance with the provisions of Welfare and Institutions Code (W&IC) §10601.2 to significantly strengthen the accountability system used in California to monitor and assess the quality of services provided on behalf of maltreated children. The C-CFSR operates on a philosophy of continuous quality improvement, interagency partnerships, community involvement and public reporting of program outcomes. The C-CFSR results in a continuous process of

improvement that builds on baselines, projections, monitoring and annual updates.

The Family-to-Family Initiative is in various phases of implementation throughout California. Partners under the California initiative include the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Stuart Foundation, the Walter S. Johnson Foundation, and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). Implementation began in 2004. Counties are working with families to improve the safety of placements, generally, as well as by having families (including children of such families) participate in the team decision-making (TDM) process. In 2005, nine additional California counties rolled out TDMs: Glenn, Humboldt, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, Tehama, Trinity, and Ventura. San Diego County began their TDM roll-out in January 2006. Kern and Solano Counties are scheduled to roll-out TDMs in the Fall of 2006. This brings the total to 19 of the 24 Family-to-Family counties that are doing TDMs. The other counties are Alameda, Contra Costa, Los Angeles, Monterey, Orange, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, and Stanislaus.

Currently, 24 out of the 58 counties participate in the Family-to-Family Initiative. Approximately, 85 percent of the 83,091 children in child welfare supervised foster care in California live in a Family-to-Family county (data from December 2005). The foundations and CDSS provide technical assistance to counties with their implementation of Family-to-Family through expert consultants.

Specific CDSS Activities

The CDSS' prevention activities over the last year include continued participation on the State Child Death Review Council. In an effort to better understand the issues with collecting accurate fatality data, the CDSS, through the State Council, participates in an annual data reconciliation audit with partnering state agencies including the Departments of Health Services and Justice. There are four statewide databases (CACI, Homicide Files, Vital Statistics and CWS/CMS) used in the reconciliation audit. The results are published in the annual report issued by the council. The information is also used to obtain a better understanding of the data trends and to develop more focused prevention campaigns.

The CDSS also contracted with the Interagency Council on Abuse and Neglect (ICAN) for county child death review team training. Last year ICAN provided training to over one hundred local child death review team members in five regions. The training provided information to team members on the proper identification of child abuse and neglect related deaths and review team processes. In 2005, two of five training sessions were completed and the remaining three are scheduled for May-June 2006.

CDSS also continues to promote the Safely Surrendered Baby media campaign. This campaign seeks to inform women that they can safely surrender their baby

to a designated place without fear of criminal prosecution. The CDSS has completed new, updated pamphlets and posters, in English and Spanish, and is now exploring the possibility of a toll free hotline number. In 2005 there were 51 safely surrendered babies. There has been a total of 122 safely surrendered babies in the period since the implementation of the Safely Surrendered Baby Law on January, 1, 2001 through December 31, 2005.

The CDSS has a child advocate that sits on the State SIDS Council. The California SIDS program, under the direction of the California Department of Health Services, Maternal and Child Health Branch, was developed to help the many individuals in California affected by a SIDS death. Services are offered to the public, as well as to medical and child care professionals in an effort to reduce the emotional suffering of SIDS families; improve the knowledge and skills of people who interact with SIDS families; increase public awareness and knowledge of SIDS; collect and monitor data on the condition; and encourage medical research on SIDS.

CDSS has established and administered a relative-approval monitoring process based on approval standards outlined in AB 1695, Chapter 653, Statutes of 2001. The CDSS utilizes CWS/CMS as a tool in reviewing county relative approval processes and documentation to ensure that all relative/non-relative extended family member placements meet the AB 1695 approval standards for safety. The relative-approval monitoring process provides a systemic approach that engages a statistically valid case review to ensure that primary caregivers and other adults living in the home are initially assessed with uniformity and periodically reassessed to determine whether they have met all licensing/approval requirements designed to ensure safety of children in relative placement. CSOB has completed the 2003 relative approval-review and will begin the 2004 relative-approval review in the Spring of 2006.

At present, the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA), requires states that receive the basic state grant to ensure the "confidentiality of all records to protect the rights of the child and the child's parents or guardians." It also requires that States have "provisions which allow for public disclosure of the findings or information about the case of child abuse or neglect which has resulted in a child fatality or near fatality." Currently, California requires court approval before child fatality information can be released. In early 2006, the Federal Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, notified CDSS that California is not in compliance with CAPTA because it requires court approval to release child fatality information.

In response to this notification and recent public interest in different means of compliance with this CAPTA requirement, CDSS established the Child Death and Near Fatality Workgroup which is comprised of representatives of the County Welfare Directors Association and other stakeholders. This workgroup assisted in policy development regarding the release of information to the public on cases

of abuse or neglect that result in child fatalities or near fatalities. The Child Death and Near Fatality Workgroup completed a careful review of existing statutes, including W&IC 827, and regulations governing confidentiality and public disclosure of information on child fatalities and near fatalities. Upon completion of the workgroup's effort, the CDSS provided the information and necessary instructions via an All County Letter in order to ensure compliance with CAPTA. The All County Letter, ACL 06-24, was released on July 21, 2006.

State of California Department of Social Services

Office of Child Abuse Prevention

**SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CALIFORNIA
CITIZEN REVIEW PANELS**

October 1, 2004-September 30, 2005

June 2006

State of California

Since 1999, California has been required to have at least three Citizen Review Panels (CRPs) in operation, in order to receive its grant for child abuse and neglect prevention and treatment programs under the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Since that time, the California Department of Social Services' Office of Child Abuse Prevention (CDSS/OCAP) has provided the funding and technical support necessary to ensure that at least three counties operate CRPs and that there is a body that functions as a Statewide CRP by reviewing the policies, practices and procedures of California's Child Welfare Services System.

This report covers the activities of California's panels for Federal Fiscal Year 2005 which began on October 1, 2004 and ended on September 30, 2005. Future directions will address Federal Fiscal Years 2006 and 2007.

County Citizen Review Panels

Objective

To ensure that there are a minimum of three county level citizen review panels in operation at all times.

Activities

Alameda, Kern, Napa, and San Mateo Counties received funding to operate panels during the reporting period. A report on their activities, findings and recommendations along with a discussion of their future directions for FFY 2006 and FFY 2007 can be found under the specific county section below.

Future Directions

The fourth citizen review panel funding cycle will begin on October 1, 2006 and end on September 30, 2008. The selection process for the fourth funding cycle will begin in March of 2006, with the issuance of an All County Information Notice (ACIN) requesting applications to operate a CRP.

In previous funding cycles, letters addressing the availability of funds and the application process were sent directly to all county welfare directors. For the 2006-2008 funding cycle, counties encouraged the use of an All County Information Notice (ACIN) to solicit applications for CRP funding. In their input to the County Welfare Director's Association (CWDA), counties recommended an ACIN since they are a common means of advising county staff regarding matters that impact counties. By giving county staff direct access to this funding information, CDSS/OCAP could facilitate a "bottom up" process in which staff and managers recommend to the county welfare director that the

county apply for this funding. It is anticipated that the ACIN process, by facilitating a “bottom up” process will result in more applications than can be funded. CDSS/OCAP will comply with the wishes of counties by giving priority to counties that have not been funded before. In this way, the CAPTA funding will be used to “seed” and expand the CRP program. Counties that will operate panels for the first time in 2006 will receive start up funds of \$2,500 to facilitate panel organization and development so that they begin their activities on or around October 1, 2006.

It is possible that some or all of the existing panels will not be funded.

Objective

Provide training and on-going technical assistance to the three county level citizen review panels.

Activities

Strategies, Region II, implemented by Interface Children Family Services, is retained by CDSS/OCAP to provide technical assistance to the county CRPs. One of CDSS/OCAP's requirements when the technical assistance consultant, was hired for the October 1, 2004 to September 30, 2006 funding cycle, was that the consultant have experience with Child Welfare Services System Improvement at the county level. This is important as county panels are beginning to review the effectiveness of their child welfare service departments in implementing policies, practices, and procedures that support these departments in meeting the goals and objectives of county System Improvement Plans that are being prepared as part of Child Welfare Services System Improvement. The consultant that was hired, Ms. Louanne Shahandeh, brings to the county CRPs her knowledge of program and staff development, children's residential facilities, and CWS management.

Objective

To review and respond to panel recommendations.

Activities

Kern and Napa counties submitted recommendations to both the state and their respective counties. San Mateo County had recommendations to the County Government only. The majority of Kern County's recommendations were addressed to the County; 90 of the 113 were for the County Government. The majority of the recommendations from Kern County addressed Independent Living although there were recommendations for improving the emergency response unit and recommendations to the State for improving the way that panels conduct their reviews.

The Napa County recommendations addressed independent living. The San Mateo County recommendations addressed team decision making. See the county reports below for more information.

CDSS will respond to the recommendations that have been addressed by May 1, 2006. The Statewide Citizen Review Panel will review the recommendations made by the counties and make comments to the State regarding these recommendations prior to any response to the local panels by the CDSS/OCAP. County CWS agencies will be notified of their obligation to review and respond by May 1, 2006 to recommendations from their panels.

The Statewide Citizen Review Panel

Objective

To ensure that there is a review body that examines the state-level Child Welfare Services System.

Activities

The new state Citizen Review Panel, which grew out of the Child Welfare Services Stakeholders' Group, was convened by two teleconferences in November of 2004. The panel met in April, June, and September of 2005.

The state panel reviewed and provided input into the Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR). Panel members expressed interest in child safety, equalization of services across counties, and in the training of CWS staff.

CDSS staff made presentations to the panel on the role of a CRP, on the APSR that was submitted to Region IX in June of 2005, and on resources for national, state and local child maltreatment data (extensive handouts were given).

Future Directions

The meetings scheduled for FFY 2006 will take place on December 12, 2005, on March 2006, and on May 15, 2006. An additional meeting will be scheduled at a later date. The December meeting includes a conference call with the county panels to discuss their recommendations. The APSR that is being developed for submission in June of 2006 will be discussed at the meetings on December 12, 2005 and March 20, 2006.

In keeping with the Stakeholders' recommendation that prevention be incorporated into all aspects of the Child Welfare Services System, the statewide CRP serves as the Prevention Advisory Council (PAC). A combined CRP/PAC fulfills the Stakeholder findings that prevention must be the foundation of Child Welfare Services System improvement and not stand on its own. The PAC is charged, as the result of the requirements of the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Program, with providing

input to the CDSS on community-based, prevention-focused family resource and support programs. The focus of the PAC has been on the development and expansion of family resource and family support collaboratives and networks comprised of community-based, county and state level organizations and agencies serving children and families. In its role as the PAC the statewide CRP can integrate a primary prevention/early-intervention perspective to its review of statewide CWS policies, practices, and procedures.

Kern County

County Information

Kern County is located in California's Central Valley. While its 2003 population was approximately 713,087, about 32 percent is under the age of 18. In the State Fiscal Year 2003/2004, there were 24,304 emergency response referrals. In August of 2004, there were approximately 3857 children in foster care.

White persons (non-Hispanic/Latino) comprise roughly 50 percent of the Kern County population, while persons of Hispanic/Latino background represented about 33 percent of the population. People who reported being "some other race" were 23.2 percent of the population, while Blacks/African Americans represented six percent. Persons who reported being "two or more races" were 4.1 percent of the population, Asians were 3.4, American Indians and Alaska Natives were 1.5 percent and Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders were less than one percent.

In 2000, foreign born persons accounted for 16.9 percent of the population, and 33.4 percent spoke a language other than English at home. Of the population 25 and older, 68 percent have graduated from high school and 13.5 percent have bachelor's degrees.

Kern's population is at an economic disadvantage relative to the state as a whole. Kern's median household income is \$35,446 compared to \$47,493 for California. The per capita income for Kern is \$15,760 and the percentage of persons below the poverty line is approximately 20.8 percent. The figures for the State of California are \$22,711 and 14.2 percent.

Panel Activities

At the end of FFY 2005, the Kern County panel made twenty-three recommendations to the state and ninety recommendations to Kern County based on the work of two of its teams. The panel made general recommendations to the state which addressed proposed changes in policy, practice, and legislation and in the state's implementation of the assurances that are required by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). Also, there were recommendations on the state's Independent Living Program as a result of the work of Team Three.

Ninety of the recommendations were addressed to the Kern County Human Services Agency. Team One, which focuses upon evaluations of the Kern County Department of Human Services' (KCDHS) efforts to secure the safety of children through effective case disposition at the emergency response level, examined the Emergency Response and Court Intake Units. As part of this evaluation, the team's and ultimately the panel's recommendations address:

- Documentation of casework.

- Training of Kern County Human Services Agency staff.
- Relationships with Community Partners such as school districts and law enforcement agencies.
- Risk assessment and the use of Structured Decision Making.
- Utilization of and the resources available to social workers.
- Community resources for families and family support.

Some of the recommendations were the result of the review of the county's Independent Living Program (ILP) that was completed by Team Three. The recommendations would have the county address:

- Ways to increase youth participation in ILP on the part of foster youth and those who have been emancipated.
- Monitoring and tracking of program participants.
- Existing and needed services for foster care and ILP youth.
- Educational and vocational resources for foster/ILP youth.
- Transitional housing.
- Networking opportunities for ILP youth.
- Collaboration among all local agencies, including the local community college district, that serve foster and ILP youth.

The Kern County annual report with its recommendations is on file at the CDSS/OCAP.

Future Directions

Given the number and magnitude of the Kern County recommendations, the panel will decide whether it should continue to have all teams focus on the development of findings and recommendations or whether the panel should develop mechanisms to address the implementation of its recommendations.

Napa County

Panel Activities

Napa County, which is world-famous for its wines, is a rural county with a population of approximately 131,607 people. Population is concentrated in the Cities of Napa, American Canyon, St. Helena and Calistoga which have many of the commercial features of larger cities; hotels, restaurants, and upscale shops that accommodate the tourist industry that has been spawned by the wineries. The wine industry employs many Hispanic farm workers.

Whites (non Hispanic/Latino) comprise roughly 69.1 percent of the population. Hispanic/Latinos are approximately 23.7 percent. Asians comprise approximately 3 percent of the population; Black or African Americans are roughly 1.3 percent; American Indians/Alaska Natives are approximately 0.8 percent and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders are 0.2 percent.

Approximately 80.4 percent of the population aged 25 or older is comprised of high school graduates. About 26.4 percent hold bachelor's degrees. Median household income in 2000 was higher than that of the state as a whole, \$51,738 compared to the state's \$47,493. Per capital income was also higher: Napa's was \$26,395 as compared to \$22,711 for California. Persons in Napa living below the poverty line comprise roughly 8.3 percent of the population compared to 14.2 percent for the state as a whole.

Activities

In FFY 2005, the panel developed a work plan that focused on the Independent Living Program (ILP), engaging and referring families to services, and safety and risk assessment measures. The recommendations of the Napa County Panel to both the CDSS and the county centered around the ILP. The recommendations to the CDSS are:

- Develop a statewide policy regarding the billing for out-of-county youth participating in local independent living programs.
- Update and revise the transitional independent living plan to make the steps for goal-setting more accessible and understandable to youth.
- Include probation youth in the CWS/CMS data base for aggregate tracking of all ILP youth.
- Improve tracking elements of the ILP in the CWS/CMS database to allow for archiving.

Recommendations for Napa County:

- Complete the Napa County ILP policies and procedures by March 2006 for review by the panel.
- Increase the FTE of the ILP coordinator to full-time.
- Continue to provide funding for ILP client transportation (e.g., taxi script, bus passes, and gas vouchers).
- Expand ILP workshops to year-round as requested by ILP youth in a recent ILP "youth-needs assessment."

Future Directions

In FFY 2006, the panel will develop a process to query CPS clients and mandated reporters to determine how well CPS is providing services and where improvements can be made.

San Mateo County

County Profile

San Mateo County is located in the Western portion of the San Francisco Bay Area, directly below the City/County of San Francisco. It is one of California's most affluent counties and as part of "Silicon Valley" is home to many high-tech firms. Many of its foreign-born are highly educated professionals who are proficient in English. However, service industries employ both Americans and the foreign-born who have limited skills.

San Mateo's population is approximately 697,456 people, of whom approximately 23 percent are under 18. In State Fiscal Year 2003-2004 there were 366 emergency response referrals and 266 children in foster care.

White persons (non-Hispanic/Latino) make up roughly 50 percent of the population, while persons of Hispanic/Latino origin make up 22 percent. Asians are 20 percent of the population, persons who reported being "some other race" are 10 percent, persons who reported being "two or more races" are 5.0, Blacks or African Americans are 3.5 percent, Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders are 1.3 percent, and American Indians and Alaska Natives are less than 1 percent of the population.

The median household income for the county is \$70,819, per capita income is \$36,045 and the percentage of persons below the poverty line is 5.8 percent. The median household income for California is \$47,493 and the state's per capita income is \$22,711. In the State of California approximately 14.2 percent of the population is below the poverty line.

Activities

The San Mateo panel continued its interest in Team Decision Making (TDM) by reviewing a report prepared by the manager of the county's TDM unit. In addition to statistics on TDM, the panel was advised of the issues that impact the discrepancy between the numbers of TDMs conducted (248) and the number of cases eligible (518). The panel was advised of the factors that impact TDM including:

- Social worker turnover.
- Parents who were not able or willing to attend.
- Need for training about when TDMs are required.
- Need to change the organizational culture to accept the role of parents and family members as experts.

The panel asked the TDM unit about the impact that TDMs have had on re-entry, and how the Human Services Agency (HSA) monitors the implementation of plans developed in the TDM setting. The panel was encouraged to observe the TDM process

and it will be supplied with the annual report on TDM implementation that is being prepared for the Stuart Foundation.

The San Mateo County panel undertook a case review process to assess the specific factors that influence re-entry into the system. The goal of the review was to enable the CRP to make recommendations about policy and procedural changes within Children and Family Services that would mitigate against the factors that facilitate re-entry. The results of these efforts will be monitored through the California Child and Family Service Review (based on a federally mandated quality-assurance review) quarterly reports.

The panel found also that there is a need for better coordination of services for families. It found that the factors that seem to contribute to re-entry are:

- Lack of parental skills.
- Substance abuse.
- Incarceration.
- Family violence.
- Lack of mental health services.
- Level of cultural/linguistic competency of the services.
- Difficulty in accessing available services by people who are struggling financially and often feel overwhelmed.

The panel identified things that can be done differently to promote the use of services which include:

- Location: Services decentralized and conveniently available.
- Transportation: Can be a barrier and often public transportation not available.
- Impact: May be better to prioritize services over the term of the case so that it is not a “full time job” to be in the system.

Other findings of the panel were that time constraints impact families (the time available to access and use referred services) and the system (timeframes may be too short to allow services to have the intended impact) and are a practical factor in family maintenance cases. Standards promote closure of cases which means that the Human Service Agency (HSA) loses leverage for promoting participation in services. The panel concluded that a more thorough risk assessment will help the HSA and the families develop a more effective focus with regard to needed services.

Formal Recommendations

The San Mateo panel made the following formal recommendations:

- The Human Services Agency should follow up on the plans developed in team decision making meetings to see if they are implemented and to assess the effectiveness of team decision making for children and families.

- The Human Services Agency should explore the reasons why some families are not accessing the services that are being offered to them during the reunification process. The following factors should be considered.
 - Best practices in providing support to families as they make a connection with the service.
 - The impact on families of trying to access multiple services at one time.
 - The possible need to prioritize the services being offered, in view of the reunification timeline.

As the result of a self-assessment process conducted earlier in the year, the panel engaged the Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC) in March 2005 to provide administrative support to the panel and to facilitate its monthly meetings.

Future Directions

The CRP will be addressing the following priorities in the upcoming year:

- Assessing its current status re: membership and recruiting new members.
- Developing operational guidelines for the panel (terms, committee structure, group agreements, self-evaluation).
- Assessing its need for training and technical assistance and accessing that support.
- Observing team decision making meetings.
- Tracking implementation of the Safety Assessment System in San Mateo County through regular reports from Judy Knowlton, HSA Program Manager.
- Monitoring team decision making implementation by receiving and reviewing quarterly reports that are submitted to the Stuart Foundation by the Human Services Agency and requesting additional information as appropriate (i.e., results of participant evaluations).
- Receiving a joint report from Sphere Institute and HSA on factors that are impacting re-entry.
- Continuing to monitor quarterly performance reports (AB 636) on system improvement.

Alameda County

County Profile

Alameda County received funding to operate a citizen review panel for the 2004-2006 funding cycle. This is the first time that the county has applied and received funding for a panel.

Alameda County is an urban county in the San Francisco Bay Area. The county seat is Oakland. Its population is approximately 1,461,030. Roughly twenty-five percent of the population is under the age of 18. For State Fiscal Year 2003-2004, there were roughly 13,766 emergency response referrals. The foster care caseload can be in the 5200 range.

Whites (non-Hispanic/Latino) comprise approximately 41 percent of the population, while Asians make up 20 percent. Hispanics/Latinos and Blacks make up 19 and 15 percent respectively of the county's population and 8.9 percent are those who report being "of some other race." Those who are of two or more races represent 5.6 percent. American Indians and Alaska Natives make up less than one percent of the county's population. Twenty-seven percent of the population is foreign born. Eighty-two percent of those age 25 or older are high school graduates, while 35 percent have bachelors' degrees. Median household income is roughly \$55,946, per capita income is \$26,680 and 11 percent of the people live below the poverty line.

Activities

The Department of Children and Family Services/Child Abuse Prevention of the Alameda County Social Services Agency and the Interagency Children's Policy Council (ICPC) of Alameda County are working in partnership to convene and staff the citizen review panel. The ICPC is a county sponsored collaborative of public and private agencies that was established in 1994 to improve outcomes for low income and vulnerable children and families through major interagency systems reform. The membership of the ICPC includes two members of the Board of Supervisors, executives from the County Office of Education, the county's Health Care Services Agency, the Juvenile Court, Law Enforcement, Social Services and community based organizations such as CASA and those that represent foster parents and youth advocates.

During FFY 2005 the County and the ICPC reported the completion of the following activities:

- Developed a recruitment process for panel members.
- Assessed the orientation, training, and technical assistance that are needed to train and orient the panel.

- Developed a “review tool” that will be used by members when they review case files.
- Developed an outline for a protocol by which the panel will solicit, evaluate and utilize public input.
- Developed a process by which recommendations will be disseminated to county and state officials.
- Developed an outline of self-evaluation plans.

The panel was expected to convene for the first time in October of 2005. However, due to the absence of two key staff members who were touched by personal tragedy, the first meeting was postponed until FFY 2006. The prospective membership includes representatives from First Five, Alameda County; the Alameda County Foster Care Youth Alliance; Alameda County Court Appointed Special Advocates; the Casey Family Programs Field Office; the Court Investigators Office; the therapeutic unit of the Hayward Police Department; a retired educator; a former foster child; a retired district attorney; and a retired coach.

Future Directions

The CDSS/OCAP has entered into discussions with the county regarding the need for the county to convene its panel and begin the review process. These discussions will continue into FFY 2006. The county has been offered the services of the technical assistance consultant.

During FFY 2006, The Alameda County panel will convene and examine the county’s policies, practices and procedures in regard to the:

- Improvement of safety outcomes for children.
- Improvement of permanency outcomes.
- Promotion of well-being for children and families.
- Provision of family-centered services.

APPENDIX A

Membership Roster Statewide Citizen Review Panel

NAME	TITLE and ORGANIZATION
Robin Allen	Executive Director, California Court Appointed Special Advocates
Nancy Antoon, LCSW	Deputy Director for Child & Family Services, Trinity County Behavioral Health, California Mental Health Directors Association rep.
Bill Bettencourt	Site Leader and Consultant, Family to Family, Annie E. Casey Foundation
Diana Kalcic	County Welfare Directors Association
Mike Carll	California Parent Leadership Team (CPLT) Parent Leader, Parents Anonymous of California
Ellin Chariton	Executive Director, Orange County Dept. of Education, Division of School & Community Services, California County Superintendents Educational Services Assn.
Miryam J. Choca	Director, California State Strategies, Casey Family Programs
Kate Cleary	Executive Director, Consortium for Children
Judy Knowlton	County Welfare Directors Association
Terri Kook	Program Officer, Stuart Foundation
Pamela Maxwell	California Parent Leadership Team (CPLT) Parent Leader, Parents Anonymous of California
Francine McKinley	ICWA/Social Services Director, Mooretown Rancheria
Michelle Neumann-Ribner, LCSW, JD	Senior Deputy San Diego County Counsel, Juvenile Division, San Diego County Office of County Counsel
James Michael Owen, JD	Assistant County Counsel, Training & Litigation Division, LA County, California County Counsel Association
Cora Pearson Alternate: Velma J. Moore	California Foster Parent Association, Inc.
John Phillips, MA	Program Supervisor, AOD Services, Mariposa County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, County Alcohol and Drug Program Administrators Assn. of CA (CADPAAC) rep.
Jennifer Rodriguez	Legislative Policy Coordinator, California Youth Connection, Former Foster Youth
Jerry Rose	Director, Yolo County Dept. of Employment and Social Services, County Welfare Directors Association
Carroll Schroeder	Executive Director, California Alliance of Child and Family Services
Carole Shaffer, JD, ME	Executive Director, Youth Law Center
Norma Suzuki	Chief Probation Officers of California
Susan A. Taylor, PhD	National Association of Social Workers, CA Chapter
Christopher Wu, JD	Supervising Attorney, Center for Families, Children and the Courts, Judicial Council of CA-- Administrative Office of the Courts

DURING FFY 2005, Judith Chynoweth, Executive Director of the Foundation Consortium and Jerry Rose, the Representative from CWDA resigned from the Panel. Mr. Rose was replaced by Diana Kalcic and Judy Knowlton. Mr. Wu was replaced by Don Wills.

**Chafee Foster Care Independence Program/Education and
Training Vouchers Program**

**CHAFEE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE PROGRAM/EDUCATION AND
TRAINING VOUCHERS PROGRAM
ANNUAL PROGRESS AND SERVICES REPORT**

Program Contact Person:

Name: Sonya St. Mary
Independent Living Program Policy Unit

Address: California Department of Social Services
744 P Street, M.S. 14-78
Sacramento, CA 95814

Telephone: (916) 651-7465

1. Program Plan Narrative

1) The State of California, Health and Welfare Agency, Department of Social Services (CDSS) administers, supervises or oversees the programs carried out under this plan; 2) the CDSS agrees to cooperate in national evaluations of the effects of the independent living programs implemented to achieve the purposes of this plan; and 3) the CDSS has reported on those accomplishments for the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2005 that are promising practices, and demonstrated State technical assistance to counties in the provision of core services. There are no planned changes to the Chafee and ETV programs at this time.

The Annual Narrative Report and Plan is annually mailed to all 58 counties. Counties are asked to provide relevant data regarding the administration of their Independent Living Program (ILP). The data provided by counties in the narrative reports is used by the State to assist counties to improve specific areas of ILP services offered to youth, to determine the need for technical assistance, and assist counties to improve specific areas of ILP services offered to youth. Counties were also asked to provide statistical data via the SOC 405A report.

The data reflected in the SOC 405A in conjunction with the Annual ILP Narrative Report provides the State with information regarding areas in need of a concerted focus, such as housing, education and employment to promote foster youth well-being. The latest SOC 405A report, for FFY 2005, reflects positive improvements in several areas of well-being for youth. A review of the latest SOC 405A data will reflect the following:

- A seven percent increase in the number of youth who completed ILP services or a component of ILP services;

- An 11 percent increase in educational attainment as a result of added emphasis in ensuring that all youth receive assistance to achieve the minimal educational level;
- A 13 percent increase in college enrollment due to more focus on attainment of higher education by foster youth;
- An 11 percent increase of youth who are employed due to increased focus on education and training;
- A 10 percent increase in the number of youth for whom housing resources were available due to a strong partnership and collaborative effort to assist youth to not become homeless.

The State maintains on-going efforts to ensure that emancipating youth are prepared to successfully emancipate from care, and continues to partner with counties and other stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcomes for foster youth.

Actual year-to-date expenditures for the Chaffee Program for FFY 2004 were \$26,122,429. Year-to-date expenditures for FFY 2005 are \$25,012,729.

a) Help youth make the transition to self-sufficiency

- The Transitional Independent Living Plan (TILP) available on the Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS) is a document used to describe the youth's current level of functioning in various areas and charts the educational, employment and housing goals the youth wishes to achieve prior to emancipation. By June 30, 2006, a protocol to include youth in case and transition planning and to enhance family participation in the transition planning process will be operational in approximately 26 counties. Recently, in cooperation with county representatives, the State convened a workgroup to revise the TILP to better meet the needs of emancipating youth. The workgroup anticipates a revised TILP by fall of 2006. The State is committed to ensuring that all youth starting at age 15 ½ and by age 16 have a TILP. Currently, the CWS/CMS is the only data system available to the State to collect this information. The State is continuing its partnership to revise the TILP for the benefit of youth and to develop an improved system to collect TILP data that can be used to determine what services promote positive outcomes.
- The Transitional Housing Placement Program (THPP) provides youth aged 16-18 with the opportunity to experience semi-supervised apartment living while receiving supportive services. Currently, the State has approved 32 counties to participate in this program.
- The CDSS annually sponsors a Teen Forum or emancipation conference to provide youth with pertinent information regarding educational, employment and housing opportunities that they will need if they are to emancipate from the foster care system and live successfully. The 2006 forum was held at California State University, Northridge, in June. Fifty percent of those who attended rated the conference overall as "Excellent," Forty-one percent rated it as "Very Good," and

nine percent rated the conference as “Average.”

b) Help youth receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment

The Foster Youth Employment and Training Taskforce continues to be a catalyst for multi-agency collaboration and partnering. The group consists of representatives from CDSS, Employment Development Department, Workforce Investment Board, Department of Labor, New Ways to Work (a workforce development organization), Casey Family, the Community College Chancellor’s office, counties, school districts and other community based organizations. The current focus of the group is: 1) identification and sharing of best practice strategies; 2) increasing housing opportunities for emancipated youth; and 3) normalizing the foster care experience so that youth in care have the opportunity to participate in developmentally appropriate activities while in care.

This group was instrumental in the development of the One Stop Training provided to county child welfare workers on the opportunities available to transition age youth at One-Stop centers and providing One-Stop Center staff with a knowledge of the importance of providing foster youth with a youth-friendly One-Stop experience. Sixty-two percent of counties report referring youth to One-Stop Centers. Other counties report that their county is too small or too rural to have a One-Stop Center. A smaller number of counties have developed their own programs that are similar to the One-Stop concept. Currently, CDSS is exploring funding sources in order to expand the training to group home staff and foster parents to encourage them to promote the benefits of One-Stop Centers to youth in their care. In addition, one of three nationally recognized workforce pilot programs, Project Hope based in Alameda County, was developed as a result of this collaborative.

The passage of AB 490 required the Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) to designate a staff person as a foster care education liaison to ensure the proper placement, transfer and enrollment in school for foster youth, among other provisions. The CDSS and the CDE issued a joint letter to the counties and to the educational community, ACIN number I-10-05, which informed counties of the provisions of this important bill, and also directed them to where they could find information as to who is their foster care education liaison. The letter also contained a list of helpful resources.

c) Help youth prepare for and enter postsecondary training and educational institutions

The CDSS has effectively administered the Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program with the assistance of the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC). The department hosts with the CSAC an annual Chafee ETV Stakeholders meeting to bring together supporters from the college financial aid community, California Department of Education, Foster Youth Services, counties, legislature,

Community College Chancellors office and the California Youth Connection. The 2006 stakeholder meeting was held April 12. The purpose of this convening was to discuss ETV program successes, to identify barriers that may impede the distribution of voucher funds to eligible youth in the most expeditious means possible and to collectively develop viable solutions.

The April 12th ETV convening identified the following successes:

- A total of 1,857 youth received ETV awards for FY 2005/06;
- California has identified a significant need for resources and interest by youth in pursuing post-secondary education and/or training;
- California has consistently expended all, or nearly all of its ETV allocation;
- The State has identified a method of distributing the ETVs to youth and accounting for unspent funds earlier so that the grants can be reissued to other eligible youth and no funding needs to be forfeited.
- A significant barrier to distributing the ETVs to youth timely has been the delay in receipt of the ETV funds. The California legislature has addressed this issue by making State funds available for the ETV until federal funding is received so as not to disadvantage youth seeking to attend school in the fall.

However, the CDSS is greatly challenged in providing all eligible youth with the opportunity to participate in post-secondary education and training in that the number of eligible youth far exceeds the federal funding available. Additionally, due to the federal funding cycle, California receives the grant funding in October, or later, after most students have already begun school in the fall. Also, the department does not have a full two years to expend the funding received. For 2005, approximately \$56,000 will be returned to the federal government. This occurred even though the need for ETV grants exceeds the funding because a number of youth who were awarded grants did not take possession of their grant award and there was not sufficient time to reallocate those unclaimed funds to other waiting students. College financial aid officers and ILP coordinators surmised that this probably occurs when youth who desperately need the funds don't receive them in time to secure housing or to take care of other essential needs. To minimize this problem in the future, financial aid offices statewide are being asked to inform the CSAC within two weeks if a youth has not claimed an ETV award. There is also pending California legislation to front-load the Chafee grants with state funding until receipt of the federal funding so that youth can apply and receive the much needed funds for their education in a more timely fashion and not have to wait until the State receives the federal monies in October, or later.

Data received from the CSAC shows that for FFY 2004, California awarded 1,174 youth with ETV awards and had program expenditures of \$8,452,447. In FFY 2005, a total of 2,158 youth received ETV awards, and there were expenditures of \$7,416,666. The number of students to receive ETV awards year-to-date for FFY 2006 is 1,899, with 612 students receiving an award for the first time. The estimated number of youth the State plans to give ETV awards for FFY 2007 is 1,000 new students and 2,000 renewal students.

- The ETV bus is an interactive computer bus with 12 computer terminals. The ETV bus travels throughout the state to rural areas, group homes, and tribal reservations to provide workshops to youth with information regarding the Chafee ETV grants and other available scholarships. While on board, youth can surf the internet for information regarding colleges, write college essays and receive information from local college financial aid counselors who are often invited to present to youth in attendance. The ETV bus has been well received; however, funding for this project will cease in June 2006 unless other funding becomes available.

d) Provide personal and emotional support to youth through mentors and the promotion of interactions with dedicated adults

- In the last year, CDSS budgeted for and began implementation of Assembly Bill (AB) 408 (Chapter 813, Statutes of 2003), which dealt with efforts to identify, evaluate and assess relationships between foster children and other important people in their lives. AB 1412 (Chapter 640, Statutes of 2005) was subsequently passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor on October 7, 2005, to ensure that children and youth are actively involved in their case plan and permanency planning process as age and developmentally appropriate.

AB 1412 created a phased-in expansion of requirements that county social workers ask children 10 years of age or older, beginning with those children placed with a non-relative, about important adult relationships and to make efforts to support those relationships. AB 1412 also required a court determination whether the agency has made reasonable efforts to maintain the child's relationships with individuals other than the child's siblings who are important to the child, consistent with the child's best interests. Further, AB 1412 specified that every foster child has the right to be involved in the development of both his/her case and permanent placement plans. It requires that a child's case plan include a statement of the child's wishes regarding their permanent placement plan and an assessment of those stated wishes. It also allows foster children 12-years of age or older to review, sign and be given a copy of their own case plan. The Governor's budget for SFY 2006-07 includes \$7.7 million for the implementation of AB 1412. Regulations for these requirements are being promulgated.

e) Provide financial, housing, counseling, employment, education and other appropriate support and services for former foster care recipients between 18 years of age and up to the day before their 21st birthday:

The Transitional Housing Program - Plus (THP-Plus) was established to provide safe, affordable housing and supportive services to emancipated foster youth through the age of 21. New legislation, AB 824 (Chapter 636, Statutes of 2005) extends the maximum age of THP-Plus to 24 years. The State has drafted an ACL to explain the provisions of this legislation to county welfare directors, program

managers, ILP coordinators and transitional housing coordinators. Counties currently providing transitional housing services to youth are reporting that youth are experiencing positive outcomes related to attainment of education and employment and well-being. For example, youth participating in transition housing:

- Experienced higher levels of enrollment in high school/post-high school, vocational training or college;
- Received their GED or high school diploma at a higher rate;
- Were more likely to graduate from an educational program;
- Were more likely to have positive, ongoing relationships with mentors and other significant supportive adults; and
- Fewer of these youth experienced periods of homelessness upon emancipation.

Emancipated Youth Stipends (EYS) are 100% State General Fund allocation to counties. EYS funds are used by counties to provide for the special needs of emancipated youth, including transportation, training, educational planning and non Medi-Cal physical and/or mental health medical treatment needs that are beyond the financial means of emancipated youth. Counties are very interested in using this stipend for the needs of emancipated youth. The CDSS frequently provides technical assistance to counties on the use of the special fund.

Emancipated Youth Stipends are allocated to counties based on the number of ILP eligible youth in care. For FY 2005/06, counties expended 95 percent of the \$3.5 million allocated to the program. Counties are reporting using the funds primarily for the “emergency” needs of foster youth because they can access the funds in an expeditious manner to cover rent deposits, minor medical emergencies, and transportation.

f) Services for youth between the age of 18 and up to the day before their 21st birthday

- Several counties reported in their ILP Annual Narrative Report and Plan that they use a portion of the Chafee ILP allocation for room and board for emancipated youth over 18 years. All counties that reported use of Chafee dollars for this purpose were well below the 30 percent ceiling allowed; they were at 9.55%. The CDSS fiscal staff is working to develop a methodology for monitoring county expenditures to ensure they continue to remain under the 30 percent limit in the future. However, the State remains well within the 30 percent limit for use of Chafee housing funds. Counties that elect to utilize Chafee funds for emancipated youth housing use them specifically for room and board. There were no reported changes to the use of Chafee housing funds.

2. Briefly describe how the Independent Living Program is served by political subdivisions in the State.

- The CDSS actively collaborates with other State of California Departments, counties, Casey Family Programs, The Community College Chancellors Office and other

community -based organizations to ensure that ILP services are available to all political subdivisions.

- Youth Transition Action Teams Initiative is a new partnership among state and local systems of public education, workforce development and social services to leverage services and mobilize resources across communities. The partnership is comprised of CDSS, California Workforce Investment Board, the State Youth Council, the California Workforce Association, New Ways to Work and the Foundation Consortium for California's Children and Youth, caseworkers, teachers, independent living coordinators, youth work professionals, current and former foster youth.
- The State consistently uses youth representatives to inform public policy through the California Youth Connection as well as youth representatives referred to the State by counties.

3) Describe how youth of various ages and at various stages of achieving independence, are to be served, particularly with regard to services for 1) youth under 16, (2) youth 16-18, and (3) youth at least 18 years of age that have not yet attained their 21st birthday.

- ILP regulations reinforce that counties may serve youth under 16 at county option. Los Angeles County has served this age group for many years and continues to offer services to this age group. Sacramento County's pilot E-STEP program also serves this age group; however, the county is seeking support from private agencies to continue to support the effort to provide youth under 16 with ILP services.
- ILP regulations require that counties offer core ILP services to this age group, including education/career counseling, employment services, life skills training, housing, and mentoring opportunities. Services are designed to meet the individual needs of youth based on the TILP.
- ILP services to youth at least 18 years of age that have not yet attained their 21st birthday primarily focuses on providing youth with post-secondary education information and referrals, transitional housing opportunities, employment assistance, mentoring and Medi-Cal services.
- Effective October 2000, California enacted legislation that extended Medicaid services to eligible emancipating foster youth up to age 21.

4) Describe how the State involves the public and private non-profit sectors in helping adolescents in foster care achieve independence.

- Collaboration with the public and private non-profit sectors is a core value for the CDSS. All major initiatives have actively involved other state agencies, counties, state/local educational institutions, foundations and non-profits. The Foster Youth Employment, Training and Housing Taskforce and the Youth Transition Action

Teams mentioned previously in this report are examples of current efforts.

- The CDSS has increased its outreach to State tribal leaders to inform them of ILP services and benefits. ILP staff has attended tribal trainings facilitated by Tribal Star consultants and participates in departmental meetings with the tribes. The Department regularly meets with tribal representatives. ILP staff attends these meetings and use this venue to solicit feedback on tribal concerns and to report out on ILP policies. The ILP Policy Unit continues to collaborate with Tribal Star regarding ILP policies and outreach to California tribes regarding full access of ILP benefits and services by Indian youth. Through workshops offered by Tribal Star including workshops conducted at the State-sponsored Annual ILP Institute, counties are provided information on strategies to ensure Chafee benefits are made available to Indian youth on the same basis as other youth. Because of the remote location of many reservations, the Chafee E-bus has been an additional tool used by the State to provide outreach to Indian youth regarding Chafee ETV and ILP services. Tribal leaders asked that the State, via the Chafee E-bus, provide financial literacy training to Indian youth to assist them to manage the funds they may acquire through Indian gaming.

5) Describe the objective criteria the State uses for determining eligibility for Independent Living Program benefits and services, including the process for developing the criteria.

The ILP regulations specify the criteria for program eligibility. Once eligibility has been determined, ILP participants are individually assessed on their strengths based on the development of the TILP. The TILP is updated every six months or sooner, if necessary. In accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code section 11375, any child in receipt of KinGap benefits is eligible to receive ILP services. Youth in KinGap are eligible to receive ILP services at age 16 as legislated by California law. California maintains State funding of ILP services, in addition to federal ILP funding, in order to meet this need. However, these funds are not included in the State funds that are used as a federal match.

6) Describe how the State ensures fair and equitable treatment of benefit recipients.

ILP regulations are the primary means of ensuring fair and equitable treatment of ILP recipients. However, California is a county-administered State and as such is challenged to ensure that services are provided to youth uniformly given the great variety in county financial resources and geography.

7) Public Comments

Recipients of the Proposed State Plan:

All County Independent Living Program Coordinators

Executive Director, The County Welfare Directors Association
Executive Director, The California Probation Officers Association
Director, The Community College Foundation
Foster Youth Services Program Coordinator, Educational Options Office,
California Department of Education
Chief, Program Support Branch, California Department of Health Services
President, The California Foster Parent Association
President, The California State Care Providers Association
Executive Director, The California Youth Connection
CDSS Tribal representatives

Annual Budget Request & Summary

Placeholder for Budget info

Placeholder for Budget info

Request for Training & Technical Assistance

Request for Training and Technical Assistance

Training and Technical Assistance

As noted throughout the APSR, there are some instances in which we believe the State would benefit from the training and technical assistance offered through Region IX, either directly provided by the staff, or through a National Resource Center (NRC).

The CDSS continues to monitor counties' progress on their system improvement plans related to a number of areas, such as safety, concurrent planning, etc. Counties in the process of updating their SIPs or who undergo a peer quality case review may identify issues in which they would desire technical assistance. We anticipate in the coming year that some counties will request technical assistance from the National Resource Centers through CDSS on a variety of issues. The CDSS issued an All County Information Notice outlining the process by which counties could request training and technical assistance, and continues to encourage counties to use the services offered by the NRCs.

An example of a county who has already requested technical assistance this year from the NRCs is Los Angeles County. As the State's largest metropolitan area and a prominent participant in the State's CFSR, Los Angeles County has identified several areas with which they have requested assistance. They have requested assistance from the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development in the area of recruitment of adoptive homes for older youth; the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption for being in full compliance with the Multi-ethnic Placement Act; and for the National Child Welfare Resource Center for Child Protective Services and the National Resource Center on Organizational Improvement in order to improve child welfare services, particularly to expand the County's Differential Response efforts. The request for assistance from National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption for assistance with the Multi-ethnic Placement Act includes a request for training, which would also include the training of adoptions program staff from Orange, San Bernardino and San Diego Counties. We anticipate the training and technical assistance, if approved, would begin in SFY 2006-07.

The CDSS requested, and has begun receiving, assistance from the National Resource Center on Organizational Improvement (NRCOI). The NRCOI is facilitating a developmental process for organizational alignment with program outcomes. This technical assistance will continue into the next SFY 2006-07.

The CDSS has previously sought expert guidance in the area of disproportionality. The CDSS has encouraged the counties to use the one of the NRCs for assistance in this area. In addition, CDSS may further utilize one of the NRCs on this issue in the coming year.

The CDSS continues negotiations of a Tribal/State agreement with the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California and the Karuk Tribe. We have already sought technical assistance from Region IX to facilitate these agreements. In addition, we have used the NRC, the National Indian Child Welfare Association, in facilitating the agreements. We anticipate the possible further use of the NRC in the upcoming year.

Glossary

Glossary

10-Largest Counties

The 10 counties which, in aggregate, contain 60% of the child welfare services caseload in California. These counties are: Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Francisco and San Mateo.

Consolidated Home Study

Our current system licenses foster parents, and if a foster parent decides that they wish to adopt a foster child they have in their home, a separate process called an adoptive home study is completed. The consolidated home study is a one-time study that would certify families for foster care and/or adoption, and would facilitate concurrent planning.

Differential Response (DR)

Differential Response is a new intake structure that responds differentially to all the referrals of child abuse and neglect made to county hotlines/intake in order to support families and reduce the number of placements of children in out-of-home care. Each referral will be evaluated in terms of statutory definitions for child welfare system (CWS) involvement for immediate safety considerations; for the choice of a response time for the initial face to face interview and for the path of response. Some referrals will be screened out as not appropriate for CWS. Others will be referred to a community network of response (after permission from the parents/caretakers is granted), and still other referrals will be opened for CWS face to face assessment.

Some CWS face to face assessments will be done without anticipating court involvement, but with the expectation that the family will be engaged to participate in services to protect the children and strengthen parental protective capacity as well as child and family well-being. Some initial assessments will be handled by CWS alone, and some by a team including CWS and partner agencies from the community. The purpose of this initial assessment is to understand what is going on within the family, what has to be done immediately to assure child safety and to engage the family in services to support parental responsibilities. All families not screened out will receive a comprehensive assessment as to their needs. This may be done by the community network of services and supports or by CWS – alone or in partnership with team members.

Fairness and Equity In the Child Welfare Services System

Fairness and Equity in the child welfare services system is characterized by:

- families whose children enter foster care who are treated the same regardless of race or ethnicity;
- children's lengths of stay in foster care are not related to their race or ethnicity;
- children's rates of reunification with their birth families are the same regardless of race or ethnicity; and
- services are culturally competent and available in the languages of the families served.

The Family to Family Initiative

The Annie E. Casey Foundation, in consultation with community leaders and child welfare practitioners nationwide, developed a reform initiative called Family to Family. Family to Family was designed in 1992 and has now been field tested in communities across the country, including Alabama, New Mexico, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Maryland.

The Family to Family Initiative provides an opportunity for communities to better screen children being considered for removal from home, to determine what services might be provided to safely preserve the family and/or what the needs of the children are; be targeted to bring children in congregate or institutional care back to their neighborhoods; involve foster families as team members in family reunification efforts; become a neighborhood resource for children and families and invest in the capacity of communities from which the foster care population comes; and provide permanent families for children in a timely manner.

Family to Family is comprised of four core strategies: Recruiting, Training and Supporting Resource Families; Building Community Partnerships; Team Decision Making and Self Evaluation. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's role has been to assist states and communities with a portion of the costs involved in both planning and implementing innovations in their systems of services for children and families, and to make available technical assistance and consultation throughout the process. The Foundation also provided funds for development and for transitional costs that accelerate system change. The states, however, have been expected to sustain the changes they implement when Foundation funding comes to an end.

Counties in California presently participating in the Family to Family Initiative are: Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Placer, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, Stanislaus, Tehama, Trinity and Ventura.

Peer Quality Case Reviews (PQCR)

The PQCR is an extension of the county's self assessment process and is guided by questions raised by the analysis of outcome data and systemic factors.

The goal of the PQCR is to analyze specific practice areas and to identify key patterns of agency strengths and concerns for the host county. The PQCR process uses peers from other counties to promote the exchange of best practice ideas within the host county and to peer reviewers. The peer reviewers provide objectivity to the process and serve as an immediate onsite training resource to the host county.

Permanence

Permanence is the maintenance and/or establishment of enduring family attachments. This includes a broad array of individualized permanency options for all children and youth, including Reunification, Adoption, Legal Guardianship and alternative permanent living arrangements, to promote their safety, permanence and well-being.

Pilot Counties

The 11 pilot counties are counties that volunteered to implement the child welfare system improvements (Standardized Safety Assessment System, Differential Response and Permanency and Youth Transitions). These counties are Contra Costa, Glenn, Humboldt, Los Angeles, Placer, Sacramento, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Stanislaus, Tehama and Trinity.

Risk, Safety and Needs Assessments

After the initial face-to-face assessment, there will be subsequent meetings with the family to do a comprehensive assessment of strengths and needs, parental protective capacity, ongoing risks and continued review of safety plans. If safety is a continuing concern and the case is being handled by the community network, the agency will re-refer the case to CWS. The nature of the case plan that emerges from the comprehensive assessment will differ based on what has to be done to assure safety, what the goals are for the case, and who should be involved in promoting the necessary changes within the family. The tools for the comprehensive assessment will apply for both in-home and out-of-home cases.

Safety assessments will be done at multiple times during the life of a case. The first face-to-face assessment will be done when direct information is gathered as to the current safety and risk. Based on this initial assessment, safety plans will be put into place immediately, as needed. By gathering information as to the concerns about the protection of the child, by exploring the protective capacity of the parents, and by preliminarily identifying needs for services, the worker will address risk. As the case moves forward to comprehensive assessment and service planning, a more thorough understanding will be obtained of family strengths and needs, as well as changes that must be made to assure the ongoing safety and protection of the child. Services and resources will be evaluated as to their effectiveness in reducing risk and in making an impact towards the needed changes. Decisions on case closure will also address safety, risk and whether necessary changes to assure child safety have been made.

Team Decision-Making (TDM)

A meeting of key stakeholders in the child's case specifically used to determine placement decisions. The meetings are always facilitated by a trained facilitator.